

READING GENESIS 1-35 IN PERSIAN YEHUD

by

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Abstract

Using a multi-dimensional historical-critical and literary method this thesis examines Genesis in a fixed socio-historical location, Achaemenid Persian period, and compares the polemic and function of the myths in Genesis to contemporaneous literature and competing ideology. The purpose of analyzing Genesis in such a fashion is to determine how the normative myths recontextualized in the text would have functioned polemically for the Yehud elite who had returned to a land with which they had ethnic ties, and who were empowered by the Persian Empire to govern. Ultimately, it is argued that while no history can be found in these myths, the paradigmatic actions of the patriarchs in Genesis communicate the ideology of the authors, and a great deal of the textual data can be explained through the historical setting of Persian Yehud, and the social, ethnic, religious, and political concerns of the Yehud elite.

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Introduction

It is the purpose of this introduction to present the framework of this study, and to set reader expectations for the assumptions and methods that will be used for analyzing Genesis. Primarily, there are two important methods that will be employed throughout this work: one, a synchronic reading of the final recontextualization of Genesis within a particular socio-historical setting (Persian period Yehud); and two, a comparison with contemporaneous literature and competing ideology (Ezra, Nehemiah, *1 Enoch*). These lenses will establish the criteria by which to interpret the textual data within Genesis.

Chapter One

In beginning this study we will start with a brief synopsis as to some of the interpretative methods that have been employed by scholars in the past for understanding the Pentateuch and Genesis. As we will see, many of the dominant models for interpreting Genesis are mainly diachronic—Scholars have suggested that the authorship/redaction of Genesis incorporates sources, myths, or traditions—and they focus on a proposed development of religious ideas and institutions. However, one of the important methods of analysis for this thesis will be synchronic. We are going to suggest a *possible* reading of the final form of Genesis within a particular socio-historical setting. The purpose of this comparison is not to adjudicate between prior interpretive methods as ‘better’ or ‘worse’, or declare one scholar ‘right’ and another ‘wrong’; but to be transparent as to the methods being used in this study, thereby locating it within prior scholarship on the subject.

However, that being said, while diachronic methods for understanding Genesis do account for the textual data by focusing on possible developments over time, a synchronic method attempts to understand a book such as Genesis in its final form in a particular socio-historical location. James Trotter in his own work on the Hebrew Bible (HB) offers this insight on focusing a study on the “final form” of a text: “The final form represents a recontextualization of the pre-existing material for a new socio-historical setting. The resulting text must be read as a new (or at least different) text in the social situation of its production and reception.”¹ Therefore, in selecting a new socio-historical setting for a literary critical reading of the recontextualization of Genesis we will begin with what has become a useful method in recent scholarship: reading the final form of Genesis synchronically in the matrix of the social conflicts and ideological context of Persian Yehud. It is this socio-historical setting that will be used as a lens for analyzing the recontextualization of the formative stories in Genesis.

Chapter Two

The purpose of this chapter is to further develop the possible social background and intellectual context of Genesis by analyzing the themes and concerns of roughly contemporaneous literature and competing ideology. As we consider the socio-historical location of Persian Yehud and the possible societal upheaval in Jerusalem, and we attempt a reading identifying the themes and concerns of Genesis within Persian Yehud, we will also attempt to bring these themes and concerns into comparison with contemporaneous literature that demonstrates the same functionality. The purpose of examining the themes of Genesis and suggesting how they might function in the societal conflicts of Yehud, and comparing these themes with the concerns and needs of contemporaneous literature is simple: if the function of

¹ James M. Trotter, *Reading Hosea in Achaemenid Yehud* (Continuum, 2001), 10.

the narratives concerning the Yehud elite in other Persian era books in some way cohere with the interests and concerns of Genesis, “those elite interests can plausibly be construed as the social and intellectual context of the book of Genesis.”²

Two important books from the HB that will be used in this study as contemporaneous literature are Ezra and Nehemiah. In chapter 2 we will begin with a synopsis of Ezra and Nehemiah in order to ascertain what the protagonist in each book actually accomplishes, what their concerns are as related in the story, and ultimately, what the ‘message’ or ideological context of the book might be, so that ultimately we may bring that ‘message’ into conversation with the possible polemic and rhetoric of Genesis. However, the larger intellectual, experiential, and social context of the author(s) of Genesis are not solely represented by the books of the HB.

Another book that may be useful in establishing an interpretive context for Genesis is *1 Enoch*, which represents the beliefs of some Jewish groups in the Second Temple period. However, in using *1 Enoch* as “contemporaneous” literature the intention *is not* to suggest that *1 Enoch* in its final textual form existed during the time of the author(s) of Genesis, but a fountainhead of the tradition (a Watchers myth), some cosmological speculation, and a proto-apocalyptic worldview might have; and this competing ideology will help in analyzing the polemic of Genesis 1–11.

In selecting *1 Enoch* and suggesting that a form of proto-apocalyptic religion may have existed in Yehud which the authors of Genesis countered in their paradigmatic myths, the method employed for Ezra and Nehemiah—synchronic and in agreement with Genesis—will change for analyzing *1 Enoch*—diachronic and not in agreement. This is not a matter of switching methods to force the data, but a matter of the time period that has been selected: the

² R. C. Heard, *Dynamics of Dissection: Ambiguity in Genesis 12-36 and Ethnic Boundaries in Post-Exilic Yehud* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2001), 16.

time period sets the parameters for which method is necessary. In the fifth century we may have books at the *compositional* stage of context (Genesis, Ezra, and Nehemiah), and formative myths and ideologies at the *precompositional* stage of context (*1 Enoch*); therefore, we must analyze these materials as they are interacting with the rhetoric of Genesis in the possible stage of context that we may find them and *in the socio-historical context that has been selected*. This method will be further elucidated in chapters 1 and 2, and applied in chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 1 and 2 provide the two major methods for this study: one, a synchronic reading of *Genesis* within a particular socio-historical setting; and two, comparing prominent themes from contemporaneous literature which informs our reading of *Genesis* in Persian Yehud. Using these methods in chapter 3 and 4 we will propose two narrative frameworks and argue how they would have functioned within the political, social, and religious conflicts that occurred in Yehud.

Chapter Three

In this chapter we will turn from the methods and hypotheses of the first two chapters, and will apply them to the textual data of *Genesis* in order to see if there is enough evidence to suggest a theory as to the function of the recontextualization of *Genesis* 1–11 within the religious and ideological conflicts of Persian Yehud. The particular goal of analyzing *Genesis* 1–11 is to determine if competing *precompositional* proto-apocalyptic religious claims in Persian Yehud may have been countered and truncated within the myths of *Genesis*. By undertaking this task we will discuss some of the ideological components of covenantalism; identify aspects and locations of truncated Enochic myths in *Genesis*; and classify pro-covenantal and anti-Enochic polemic in *Genesis* 1–11.

Ultimately, it will be suggested that the author(s) of the Genesis myths employed paradigmatic figures from the ‘past’ to legitimize their ideology concerning the knowledge of good and evil; and the divine intervention and retribution of God for those who do not choose that knowledge. Furthermore, the myths of the Yehudian elite found in Genesis incorporate and truncate the myths of important figures from the legitimizing *precompositional* myths of other religious groups (proto-apocalyptic beliefs). By doing so, the myths as properly told in Genesis counter any possible proto-apocalyptic competing myths, and by a process of addition through subtraction, disempower the competing myth by adding it to their own ‘proper’ story.

Chapter Four

In this chapter we will propose a second narrative framework, Genesis 6–35, and argue that a prominent theme for this section represents a particular interest of the social elite who had returned to Yehud from Persia, and were strictly advocating against intermarriage between ‘Israel’ and the people of the land. In supporting this argument we will consider archetypal endogamous marriage presentations in Genesis 6–35, and compare the relationship between the paradigmatic actions and words of the patriarchs in Genesis with cohering themes in Ezra and Nehemiah. The main hypothesis in this chapter argues that the myths of Genesis reflect the social/political/ethnic concerns of the elite in Persian Yehud concerning appropriate (endogamous) and inappropriate (exogamous) marriage practices. It will be argued that in attempting to legitimate endogamous marriage practices the landscape of the salient ‘past’ in Genesis reinforces the voices of ‘Ezra’ and ‘Nehemiah’ in object lessons and stories that model appropriate behavior for the ‘real’ Israel in Persian Yehud and those who have entered into a covenant and oath of endogamy.

Summary

Lester Grabbe has wisely suggests that “All reconstructions are provisional; all reconstructions must be argued for.”³ There is no historical reconstruction concerning the interpretation of Genesis that ‘certainly’ ‘must’ have happened. There is no *hypothesis* which closes the discussion and further research. The data we have is limited, often contextless, and separated from us by a great deal of time and conceptual space. Any historical reconstructions are merely that: reconstructions. Some may be better than others, and perhaps account for more textual data—and even then there can be a wide range of disagreement on which hypotheses are ‘better’—but any method, reconstruction, or conclusion is contingent and provisional.

Ultimately, the ‘success’ of this study will not hinge on whether a certain preferred method for one scholar is better than another method utilized by a different scholar, but on whether the method selected for *this* study can indeed account for the textual data. We will put forth a hypothesis in chapter 1 and 2, and test that hypothesis by applying it to the textual data of Genesis 1–35 in chapters 3 and 4. Finally, *after* this testing, and our presentation of evidence, we will be able to decide the utility, success, or failure of this study. At that time, the question we will pursue: does the method employed in this study reasonably account for the textual data? If it does then we can consider it one *possible* interpretation of the recontextualization of Genesis in Persian Yehud. However, before we can consider that question in the conclusion of this study we must turn to our main body of evidence.

³ Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 36. In the introduction to his *prolegomena* Grabbe describes the basic methodological rules that inform his own historical inquiry: (1) All potential sources should be considered. Nothing should be ruled out a priori. (2) Preference should be given to primary sources. (3) The context of the *longue durée* (geography and climate) must always be recognized and given an essential part in the interpretation. (4) Each episode or event has to be judged on its own merit. (5) All reconstructions are provisional. (6) All reconstructions have to be argued for, 34-36.

Chapter 1: A Method for the Study of the Final Recontextualization of Genesis

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the first half of the method that will be employed for a literary-critical reading of Genesis 1–35 in chapters 3 and 4. This method primarily utilizes synchronic assumptions—though *precompositional* and diachronic techniques will be used when appropriate as well—and operates under the assumption that a valuable lens for understanding the *function* of the narratives in Genesis can be found through the political, social, and religious conflicts of Persian era Yehud. However, before outlining the method I will utilize in analyzing Genesis in subsequent chapters, a modest overview as to some of the interpretative methods used in the past to understand Genesis will be useful in creating some context for the method that will be employed in this study.

A Brief History of Interpretative Methods for the Pentateuch and Genesis

In the history of scholarship concerning the Pentateuch the book of Genesis has played a pivotal role. From the source-theory of Graf and Wellhausen, to the form-critical work of Gunkel, and to the tradition histories of von Rad and Noth: time and again the different methods of these preeminent scholars have found fertile ground for analysis and application in the textual data of Genesis. It would be a daunting task for a PhD student to attempt a summary of the myriad of different approaches to pentateuchal studies over the last two centuries, never mind an MA thesis: there has been no shortage of essays, monographs, theses, and dissertations; it would simply not be possible to engage every study. For that reason, the goal in this study in general, and this chapter in particular is not to rehash the many arguments concerning dating, historicity, redaction, or composition; however, it is still important to summarize briefly some of the more

prominent methods that have been used to account for the textual data in Genesis, and understand how those interpretative methods relate to the method that will be used in this study.⁴ Therefore, we will highlight some older and recent trends in pentateuchal scholarship, and from that review present a model for a literary-critical reading of Genesis within the historical and social context of Persian Yehud.

In considering the many methods which have been employed in pentateuchal studies throughout the history of biblical scholarship there are roughly three stages of context for interpretation which are used to account for the textual data. The first stage of context is *precompositional*: the original setting in which a story, myth, or saga was spoken and heard. This focus was important for the hypotheses of scholars such as von Rad and Gunkel. A second stage of context for interpretation is *compositional*: the developmental or redactional stage which the material passed through; how the stories were collected, arranged, and written. Concentration on the compositional stage is evident in the method of Wellhausen and other source critics. The third stage of context is *recontextual*: the setting in which the final form was written. This final form is the important stage of context for engaging the textual data of Genesis in this study. Commenting on this stage of context James Trotter writes, “The final form represents a recontextualization of the pre-existing material for a new socio-historical setting. The resulting

⁴ Further reading with more detailed summaries concerning the history of pentateuchal scholarship: Joseph Blenkinsopp, “Two Centuries of Pentateuchal Scholarship” in *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1-28; Joel S. Baden *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library; Yale University Press, 2012); Richard E. Friedman, *Who Wrote The Bible?* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997); Jon D. Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993); James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press), 2007; Gordon J. Wenham *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

For the general current state of Old Testament studies and interpretive methods: James Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament: Biblical Studies at the End of a Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). John Barton, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); John J. Collins *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); John W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

text must be read as a new (or at least different) text in the social situation of its production and reception.”⁵ We will briefly analyze the first two stages of context in some scholarship concerning Genesis for the purpose of understanding method, and then expand on the third stage of context as it relates to this study.

The Precompositional and Compositional Contexts in Pentateuchal Studies

The traditional view of both Christianity and Judaism suggests that Moses wrote the Torah. Baruch de Spinoza was one of the first to dispute this tradition when he wrote, “it is thus clearer than the sun at noonday that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses but by someone who lived long after Moses.” Following Spinoza, there were a series of important works relating to Genesis involving scholars such as Witter and Astruc.⁶ From their influential work the situation at the beginning of the nineteenth century “was, then, that practically all Old Testament scholars outside of the ecclesiastical mainstream rejected the idea that Moses had authored the Pentateuch.”⁷ However, there did persist the notion in conservative circles that perhaps Moses had used sources and compiled them rather than ‘author’ the book as such.⁸

⁵ Trotter, *Reading Hosea*, 10.

⁶ Witter proposed the different use of divine names in parallel sources, while Astruc identified ‘Elohistic’ and ‘Jehovistic’ sources.

⁷ Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch*, 4.

⁸ This view has even gained a foothold into more recent evangelical scholarship: “We are satisfied that Genesis in its present, final form is a cohesive unit that shows thoughtful order and a self-consistent theology. This, we believe, can be demonstrated. Essentially, there is one mind that has shaped the book, whom we believe to have been Moses. Therefore we are comfortable speaking of that mind as “author,” though most likely some compiling of sources was involved.” K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26* (NAC 1A; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 24. Bruce Waltke suggests, “In sum, the founder of Israel is the most probable person to transpose its national repository of ancient traditions into a coherent history in order to define the nation and its mission... having been highly educated in Pharaoh’s court as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter (Ex 2:1-10), in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth dynasty, (ca. 1400-1300 B.C.), Moses had unique access to the ancient Near eastern myths that show close connection with Genesis 1-11... Moses’ training as a budding official in Pharaoh’s court also would have given him firsthand education in the ancient Near Eastern law codes... As a historian Moses would have used sources.” Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 23-24.

A significant transition in the history of pentateuchal scholarship took place in the work of Martin Leberecht de Wette who argued that the narrative traditions could not be considered history and that “nothing could be known about the historical Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or Moses, the exodus, the lawgivings or the wilderness wanderings.”⁹ Instead de Wette considered these stories mythical with the goal of stating Israel’s mythic understanding of itself. Another important aspect of De Wette’s work in pentateuchal scholarship is that he was the first scholar to “use certain parts of the Old Testament against other parts in order to produce an account of the history of Israelite religion that was radically at variance with the account given in the Old Testament itself.”¹⁰

Pentateuchal scholarship after De Wette continued to identify and date sources for the Pentateuch, and the goal of much work was “reconstructing the historical development of religious ideas and institutions in Israel.”¹¹ The study of the *development* of Israel’s religious history and texts is the second stage of context for interpretation mentioned above, the *compositional*. While there were a variety of scholars making important additions to pentateuchal studies in the early nineteenth century perhaps no scholar dominates their particular field like Julius Wellhausen, whose method is indebted to pursuing the idea of development.

Wellhausen’s principal achievement was “to synthesize and refine the work of predecessors, from de Wette to Graf, in a historical sketch of the religious history of Israel which, in a certain sense, has dictated the agenda of Old Testament studies to the present day.”¹² According to Wellhausen’s famous theory of the development of the Pentateuch, known as the

⁹ John William Rogerson, *W.M.L. de Wette, Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism: An Intellectual Biography* (JSOTSup, 126; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 52.

¹⁰ Donald K. McKim, *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 355-58, here 357.

¹¹ Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch*, 8.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10.

Documentary Hypothesis (DH), there were four main sources: J (Jahwist, 10/9th cent.); E (Elohist, 9/8th cent.); D (Deuteronomic, 7th cent.); and P (Priestly, 6/5th cent.). These sources were distinguished on the basis of five main criteria: different names of the deity; duplicate narratives; different vocabulary; different style; and different theologies.¹³ Wellhausen also identified four covenants which made up the P material identified by the letter Q, and believed that Q along with the Law of the Holiness code signaled a final priestly revision of the Hexateuch.¹⁴ There has been no shortage of dissenters to the four-source hypothesis since Wellhausen first published his work. However, many of the disagreements are with the dating and the priority of the sources. In addition, other scholars have posited even more sources and sub-sources to Wellhausen's original four (L, H, J1, J2, PA, PB, etc.), resulting in a number of siglets for the many proposed sources of the Pentateuch.

Following Wellhausen, the History of Religions School initiated a new direction in pentateuchal study which focused on the *precompositional* biblical material. In short, they believed that merely separating the sources of a text was inadequate; one must also focus on the oral tradition and transmission of a narrative before suggesting the entire development of the biblical literature and religion. This type of method is the first stage of context above, and focuses on the original precompositional stage of a story, myth, or saga.¹⁵ This focus is

¹³ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC 1; Dallas: Word, 2002), xxvi.

¹⁴ "That the Priestly Code consists of elements of two kinds, first of an independent stem, the Book of the Four Covenants (Q), and second, of innumerable additions and supplements which attach themselves principally to the Book of the Four Covenants, but not to it alone, and indeed to the whole of the Hexateuch." Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885), 385. Also, "The Priestly Code, worked into the Pentateuch as the standard legislative element in it, became the definite 'Mosaic law.' As such it was published and introduced in the year 444 b.c., a century after the exile. In the interval, the duration of which is frequently under-estimated, Deuteronomy alone had been known and recognised as the written Torah, though as a fact the essays of Ezekiel and his successors may have had no inconsiderable influence in leading circles. The man who made the Pentateuch the constitution of Judaism was the Babylonian priest and scribe, Ezra." Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 405.

¹⁵ Von Rad and Noth would be other scholars indicative of this method, and also believed that the answers sought by the source critics as to the development of Israelite religion and literature were to be found in the earliest period before any of the sources were put together.

summarized by Albert Eichorn's statement that "Any interpretation of a myth which does not consider the origin and development of the myth is false."¹⁶ For this type of method Hermann Gunkel is "to be regarded as the chief pioneer of tradition-historical research."¹⁷

In pursuing the precompositional stage Gunkel did not neglect the compositional stage — his method began with source critically defined narratives— however, in attempting to identify the absolutely original forms of the sagas, he was really trying to trace the *whole process* of historical development.¹⁸ Gunkel writes,

Up to the present time, Old Testament study has concerned itself chiefly with literary problems and has dealt with the prevailing religio-historical questions in relation to literary criticism. Thus in Genesis the focus has fallen on the differentiation and dating of sources. To this point in time, the origin and tradition history of the narratives in Genesis have only been touched upon."¹⁹

By following this agenda he attempted to identify the oral prehistory of distinct units in Genesis which he called *saga*, and "By paying close attention to the literary and aesthetic features of the individual narrative units in Genesis, he believed it possible to establish the respective types, or *Gattungen*, and identify the social situations which generated them."²⁰

The Recontextual Context for Interpreting Genesis

There is a literal kaleidoscope of pentateuchal hypotheses since DeWette, Wellhausen, von Rad, Gunkel, Noth, and the many other well-known historian and scholars (van Seters, Westermann, Rendtorff, and Coats) who have contributed much to the conversation of sources, traditions, and history. An important reason for this brief review of the above pentateuchal

¹⁶ Hugo Gressman, *Albert Eichorn und die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924), 8.

¹⁷ Douglas A. Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel* (SBLDS, 9; Missoula: Scholars Press, revised edition, 1975), 58.

¹⁸ Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions*, 65.

¹⁹ Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton* (trans. K. William Whitney Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 3.

²⁰ Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch*, 15.

scholarship is to set the context of the current work within prior study. Above we noted three different contexts for pentateuchal study: one that considers the oldest form of a distinct unit as having value for understanding, a second context which posits the development of the material through time as having explanatory power, and a third context which analyzes the final form and recontextualization of Genesis: this third stage is an important context of interpretation for this study.

However, selecting a possible stage of context for interpretation is not attempting to decide on the merits of prior scholars' work *per se*, but to place my own reading of Genesis within popular scholarship: both older and more current models. James Trotter offers a valuable insight to this approach,

This is not an effort to delineate the compositional history of the text but to endeavor to suggest a possible reading of the final form of the book... *within a particular socio-historical context* [emphasis mine]. Choosing to focus on the final form of the book is not an attempt to deny the validity or value of these other approaches but simply represents the selection of one possible aspect of the interpretation of the text.²¹

There will be no effort here to “attempt to deny the validity or value of these other approaches” for two reasons. One, the methods do account for a great deal of textual data, and two, the reading of the final form of the book of Genesis in the following chapters is indebted to the traditional methods and conclusions of historical-critical approaches to pentateuchal studies; however, it also relies heavily on newer interpretive approaches within the field.

Furthermore, I believe that some of the assumptions and conclusions of traditional historical criticism have utility and will be incorporated into the current work. For example, De Wette's insistence that Genesis does not contain any actual history is in accordance with a major assumption for this study. Wellhausen's assertion that the final form of the Pentateuch is to be

²¹ Trotter, *Reading Hosea*, 11.

located in the fifth century BCE is also an important part of the method which will be employed here. Gunkel's belief that by paying close attention to literary readings he could identify the *precompositional* social situations which generated the literature is an important method that will be applied to the material of *1 Enoch* in chapter 3.

However, while some of these assumptions are to be incorporated—textual, synchronic, diachronic—there is an important distinction: ultimately by reading Genesis through the lens of the social conflicts of Persian Yehud, and suggesting that this socio-historical setting is the framework by which to understand the recontextualization of these stories, the *modus operandi* for this thesis will be, in a sense, synchronic in nature. Nevertheless, there is an important distinction to be made: in using the word “synchronic” we are not using the word textually, but *historically*. The most important aspect for this study is the socio-historical location that has been selected. In essence, this location is like walls around a city: the books that will be analyzed may have undergone a period of development prior to the fifth century BCE; there may have been further ideological developments after the Persian empire into the Hellenistic period; there may have been further literary developments and iterations; but the material under consideration in this study *must remain under consideration in Persian Yehud*. The important question here is: how did these books and ideologies possibly function within the political and societal upheavals of this period? Not in the Assyrian, Babylonian, Hellenistic, or Roman periods; but how did this material possibly function *in the Persian period*. Not that these other questions are without validity, or would not bear solid conclusions from the textual data: but it is not the thrust of this study. The methods and aims of this thesis must remain inside the boundaries of the Persian Empire and Yehud in the fifth century BCE.

Furthermore, in selecting this time period as the parameter by which this study will proceed, there is no attempt made here to set up some kind of diachronic/synchronic dichotomy—nor do I wish to evaluate which approach is ‘better’ (as both will be employed)—but, once again, the purpose is “To endeavor to suggest a *possible* reading of the final form of the book... the selection of one *possible aspect of the interpretation of the text*” [emphases mine].²² The purpose of this study is not to evaluate diachronic/synchronic assumptions, but to analyze certain material within the matrix of a particular socio-historical location. This means then, and this is important, that certain material may have been at the compositional stage of context *in this socio-historical location*, and other material may have been at the precompositional stage of context *in this socio-historical location*.

Consequently, not only are we developing a hypothesis concerning Genesis in its ‘final form’ in the social, political, and religious conflicts of Persian Yehud, and suggesting that “The final form represents a recontextualization of the pre-existing material for a new socio-historical setting. The resulting text must be read as a new (or at least different) text in the social situation of its production and reception;”²³ but in addition, any other material that we consider in this study—Ezra, Nehemiah, *1 Enoch*—must also be considered within this socio-historical context. The most important aspect in this study is the historical location; whatever method is used to analyze the textual material is necessitated by this historical setting; and it is this socio-historical setting only that will be used as a lens for analyzing the recontextualization of the formative myths in Genesis.²⁴

²² Trotter, *Reading Hosea*, 11.

²³ *Ibid.*, 10

²⁴ Here I am not suggesting that these stories were entirely created during the Persian period; however, I believe they were appropriated and innovated for the Persian socio-historical context. The stories which were selected to form Genesis were used because they likely already had value in Yehudian society—however old they might be, or what process of variation they may have undergone over time—and because they likely existed prior, they were powerful cognitive scripts to bring together into a mythic narrative of social cohesion. Noah, Abraham,

Therefore, in selecting a socio-historical setting for a literary critical reading of the recontextualization of Genesis, and other contemporaneous literature and ideologies, we will turn to what has become a useful method in recent scholarship: reading the final form of Genesis within the matrix of the social conflicts and ideological context of Persian Yehud.²⁵

A Socio-Historical Context for Interpreting Genesis

The method proposed for the literary reading of Genesis initiates in a paradigmatic shift in the study of the Hebrew Bible (HB) during the last thirty years. For the majority of the twentieth-century many biblical scholars generally followed the historical-critical model furnished by Wellhausen, or the tradition history school, combined with an assumption that the apex of Israel's history occurred during a united monarchy ca. the 10th or 9th century BCE. Many 'histories' of Israel were reconstructed using the biblical text as proof of itself; however, many of these 'histories' were often little more than a recapitulation of the story therein. Furthermore, later biblical periods known as 'exilic' and 'post-exilic' were considered lesser, dark periods about which the scholar could have much less historical knowledge.

The primary assumption of many diachronic methods is that the 'sources' for the creation of the Pentateuch were old, and that there was a process of development in Israelite religion that could be reconstructed by identifying and dating these sources. Wellhausen states the methodological assumption of his forebears succinctly when commenting on Graf's belief that

Isaac, and Jacob were the names and stories which carried the legitimization of their recontextualization. These were the paradigmatic patriarchs whose stories had to be understood properly in the constructive memory of the Jerusalem elite. Furthermore, the fact that source and tradition scholarship methodologies do account for the textual data when employed in the first two contexts mentioned above, seems to suggest some development in these narratives. However, as the goal of this study is to read Genesis in a Persian *recontextualization*, I am operating in the third context primarily but not exclusively.

²⁵ For arguments assigning the authorship/redaction of Genesis to the Hellenistic period, and to the authorship of much of the biblical literature, see Niels Peter Lemche "The Old Testament—A Hellenistic Book?," SJOT (1993): 163-93; Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past* (New York: Basic, 1999), 196-99.

the Priestly Code was the “main stock” of the Torah: “To say all in a word, the arguments which were brought into play as a rule derived all their force from a moral conviction that the ritual legislation *must* be old, and *could* not possibly have been committed to writing for the first time within the period of Judaism.”²⁶

However, as opposed to a historical reconstruction in which the biblical narrative stands as proof of itself,²⁷ or suggesting that ‘understanding’ Genesis is to be accomplished by tracing its development, a hypothesis developed in scholarship suggesting that many of the texts of the HB which were once considered ‘historical’ do not relate to either an actual ‘patriarchal’ or ‘united monarchy’ period, or give modern historians reliable historical information; however, the texts under consideration do inform us about the concerns and needs of authors in much later historical and social contexts. This hypothesis suggested that for many of the books of the HB the *actual* social location and historical context for understanding these texts should be located in the political and social conflicts of Persian Yehud. *In nuce*, the hypothesis states: A modern scholar cannot learn much useful history from the HB—in the sense of reading the patriarchal or monarchal stories as *actual* history—however, we can learn about the concerns and needs of the authors of the HB located in the post-exilic Persian province of Yehud: the very way they told these stories, and the concerns they emphasized, spoke to a certain situation in their time.

This model for interpretation has been employed in several scholarly works, and in each case scholars concluded that the biblical ‘history’ tells the modern historian much more about the time of its composition, Persian period Yehud, than some pre-exilic ‘past’.²⁸ Mario Liverani’s *Israel’s History and the History of Israel* is a recent systematic attempt to separate the history of

²⁶ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 11-12.

²⁷ Which Heard calls “Rationalistic paraphrases” in R. C. Heard, *Dynamics of Dissection: Ambiguity in Genesis 12-36 and Ethnic Boundaries in Post-Exilic Yehud* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2001), 8.

²⁸ Philip R. Davies, *The Origins of Biblical Israel* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 4.

ancient Judah and Israel (what he terms “normal history”) from the story in the biblical text that reflects a later historical context and agenda (what he terms “invented history”).²⁹

The speedy return to Palestine of Judean exiles not fully assimilated to the imperial world, their attempt to create a temple-city (Jerusalem) on a Babylonian model and to gather around it a whole nation (Israel, in the broader sense) implied a huge and variegated rewriting of an ‘ordinary’ history with the aim of creating a suitable context for those archetypes that they intended to revitalize: united kingdom, monotheism and single temple, law, possession of the land, holy war, and so on. The whole history of Israel, therefore, had to be characterized by a very special calling.

While the real but normal history had no more than a local interest, the invented and exceptional one became the basis for the foundation of a nation (Israel) and of a religion (Judaism) that would have an influence on the subsequent history of the whole world.³⁰

This theory has been successful enough that a number of studies recently published “assume, rather than argue, that the social context of a great deal of the biblical literature in its present form (in particular, Pentateuch, Former Prophets, Latter Prophets) is to be sought in the Persian period.”³¹

This change in perception according the historicity of post-exilic literature has led to a shift in the goals of historical inquiry concerning the HB for some scholars. Instead of pursuing

²⁹ “The realization that foundational episodes of conquest and law-giving were in fact post-exilic retrojections, aiming to justify the national and religious unity and the possession of the land by groups of returnees from the Babylonian exile, implied a degree of rewriting of the history of Israel, but did not challenge the idea that Israel was a united (and powerful) state at the time of David and Solomon and that a ‘First Temple’ really existed. Hence the return from exile was understood as recreating an ethnic, political and religious reality that had existed in the past. Recent criticism of the concept of the ‘United Monarchy’ has questioned the Biblical narrative from its very foundation, because it reduces the ‘historical’ Israel to one of several Palestinian kingdoms swept away by the Assyrian conquest. Any connection between Israel and Judah in the pre-exilic era (including the existence of a united Israel) is completely denied. At this point, a drastic rewriting of the history of Israel is needed... The result is a division of the history of Israel into two different phases. The first one is the ‘normal’ (i.e. not unique) and quite insignificant history of two kingdoms in Palestine, very similar to the other kingdoms destroyed by the Assyrian and then Babylonian conquests, with the consequent devastation, deportations and deculturation. This first phase is not particularly important, particularly interesting, nor consequential.” Mario Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel* (London: Equinox, 2005), xv-xvi.

³⁰ Liverani, *Israel's History*, xvi-xvii.

³¹ Davies, *Origins*, 4, n 7. A few recent examples, Heard, *Dynamics of Dislocation*; E. T. Mullen Jr., *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations: A New Approach to the Formation of the Pentateuch* Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1997); James M. Trotter, *Reading Hosea in Achaemenid Yehud*, (Continuum, 2001); J. W. Watts, *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Torah* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

historical *facticity*—as the self-presentation, polemic, and systemic legitimization which occurs in the Persian-era texts can no longer be considered reliable as ‘history’—scholars can, using a variety of historical and sociological methodologies, begin to pursue the *function* of these texts within the milieu of Persian imperialism and the social conflicts of Yehud.³² That is to say, while we can no longer consider these texts as reliably providing us with historical accounts, we can reconstruct the concerns and aims of the authors that lie behind these texts by considering the *function* of these texts against historical reconstructions of the Persian period which include the HB, but also a variety of other sources outside of the HB.

By adjusting the focus of textual interpretation (function instead of facticity), and questioning the certainty with which others have approached the historicity of the biblical narratives, some scholars view several texts authored during the postexilic period from a much different perspective. In analyzing the formative literature from this period, new theories and interpretations that significantly alter prior assumptions surface. Therefore, since we are suggesting Persian Yehud and the concerns and needs of the Jerusalem elite as valuable lenses for interpreting the textual data in Genesis it is important to review some aspects of that particular socio-historical situation.

The Persian Empire and Yehud

The reconstruction of Yehud offered here concerning Persian imperial policy is fairly short as the goal is not to engage in a detailed history of Yehud and the Achaemenid empire, but to briefly demonstrate the changing and unsettled situation that the proposed author(s) of Genesis

³² Mullen Jr., *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations*, 55.

may have found themselves in.³³ At times there was direct imperial intervention in Jerusalem and Yehud, but also periods of little Persian influence; there were times of imperial funding for building projects (money coming in), but also times of heavy taxation (money going out). Persia preferred to rule its provinces, including Yehud, through governors, and possibly religious leaders. In Yehud, those with ethnic ties to the land were sent back with imperial power to implement imperial policies which were favourable to the empire.³⁴ Generally then, in the texts the elite of Yehud authored, we find favourable references to their Persian overlords (Cyrus is

³³ Sources for Persian history and Yehud: Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch*, 239-42; Jon L. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 23-120; Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London: Equinox, 2005); Lisbeth S. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004); Richard N. Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran* (Munich: Beck, 1983); James Maxwell Miller and John Haralson Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (OTL London: SCM Press, 1986), for a map of *Abar Nahara* see 461; Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming, eds., *Judah and Judeans in the Persian Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006); A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1948); Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990). I do not believe this study needs another detailed history of the Persian empire. Primarily, I assume three major possibilities for substantial social conflict in Yehud: the first period is during the reign of Cyrus and the return of some people with ethnic ties to the land. Cyrus's program of economic intensification—from Yehud in the direction of the empire—may have been a setting for conflict; however, after analyzing the stories in Genesis with the method proposed I believe this the least likely possibility. The second period is during the reign of the third Achaemenid emperor, Darius, who commanded a temple be built in Jerusalem. Darius, sent a noble in Persia with ethnic roots in Yehud, Zerubbabel, to oversee this project along with the high priest Yeshua. The construction of the Second Temple had significant religious and social impact; however, there were economic and political reasons for Darius' requiring such an edifice. With a loyal Persian governor in Jerusalem overseeing the temple, economically the building acted as a center for the collection of taxes for the empire which may have also led to substantial social conflict.

The third possibility is during the reign of Artaxerxes who, like many of the emperors before him, was involved in disputes with Egypt and was interested in Yehud for economic gains and military strategy. Early in the reign of Artaxerxes, the Persian general Megabyzus brought his Persian forces near Yehud on its way south to challenge an Egyptian-Greek alliance. It is during this period it seems that Artaxerxes sent strong governors to the border colony of Yehud to strengthen its defenses. Artaxerxes also reversed Xerxes' policy concerning temple funding and may have used the economic support of the temple and religion propagandistically like Darius before him. However, while there may have been significant imperial funding and administrative support during the first part of Artaxerxes reign, upon the defeat of the Egyptians, Yehud may have found itself, once again, an underfunded and overtaxed poor colony on the outskirts of the kingdom.

³⁴ This does not mean that I am in favour of the contentious hypothesis of Persian imperial authorization of the Torah: Berquist, *In Persia's Shadow*, 138-39; Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch*, 239-42; Lester L. Grabbe *Ezra-Nehemiah* (London: Routledge, 1998), 149-50; Konrad Schmid, "The Persian Imperial Authorization as a Historical Problem and as a Biblical Construct: A Plea for Distinctions in the Current Debate" in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance* (Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levison eds.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 23-38; James W. Watts, ed., *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch*. Ultimately, the investigation here concerns the function of the narratives of Genesis in Persian era Yehud. Whether or not they were 'authorized' by Persian overlords, or to what degree there may have been Persian involvement with the Pentateuch's production, is not a question I will consider in this study.

even referred to as *meshiach*, Isa 45:1). However, the point of this system of rule was to profit the empire; therefore, even in the ‘memoirs’ of the Persian appointed governor Nehemiah we find a reflection of the memory of oppressive imperial taxes where supposedly some even lost their homes and children to pay their taxes (Neh 5:1–5).

In addition, Yehud very likely experienced significant social, ethnic, and religious upheaval. Social upheaval, generated by the return of a group of persons with ties to the land and who were empowered to govern; ethnic upheaval, from a possible program of endogamy; and religious upheaval, by a new single temple religion.³⁵ The function of a text such as Genesis then, is an attempt to normalize and authenticate the new social circumstances most of the society found themselves in by appealing to paradigmatic situations from the past and recontextualizing them for their present state of affairs. This changing and unsettled environment is the backdrop for the religious, social, and political conflicts that will be examined in the themes of Genesis and other HB books in the following chapters.

This historical backdrop has led to a new perspective on Yehud, and the interpretation of texts supposedly written in the Persian province of *Abar Nahara* during the time of the Achaemenid Empire. In the introductory chapter of a recent volume dedicated to the importance of the Persian period for understanding the HB’s literature editor Jon L. Berquist neatly summarizes the working assumptions of scholars pertaining to the new perspective on Yehud as a Persian colony with a diverse population:

³⁵ Diana Edelman argues on the basis of genealogical material in Nehemiah that either Zerubbabel and the building of the temple need to be moved to the reign of Artaxerxes, or Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem moved to the reign of Darius. Her conclusion regarding this matter is that the temple was built during the reign of Artaxerxes. Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the ‘Second’ Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London: Equinox, 2005). It would be interesting in the context of the argument of this thesis to reduce the political, social, and religious conflicts of Yehud to a single era. Such a level of innovation and political upheaval would be a significant setting for many of the arguments which follow; however, as the goal of this chapter is merely to set the literature of Genesis within some kind of social upheaval during the Persian period in Yehud, and then in following chapters examine the possible function of those narratives in such an unsettled situation, it is not necessary to fully pursue such an exact date.

- The Babylon incursions of the early sixth century B.C.E. removed a minority of the population of Jerusalem.
- Only a small minority of the descendents of these deportees migrated from Babylonia to Yehud in 539, and they migrated over a period of several decades.
- The population of Jerusalem and its environs in the Persian period was much smaller than earlier estimates (and these estimates have continued to decline from tens of thousands to perhaps a few thousand.)
- The exilic period produced little of the literature that became the Hebrew Bible, but much of the literature may have been assembled in a relatively short period of time in the fifth century (and some would identify a later period).
- The community of Yehud was not unified but experienced substantial social conflict. This included diverse opinions about the construction and function of the Second Temple as well as cultic practices.
- Yehudite culture was strongly influenced by Persian imperial politics. The empire utilized methods of social control in Yehud similar to those that the empire employed in other colonies, and the Hebrew Bible shows evidence of this social and ideological intervention.
- The economies of Yehud as a Persian colony are crucial to the understanding of the society and literature of the period.
- Yehud was a site for ethnic conflict and ethnic definition, perhaps setting the stage for later understandings as well.³⁶

This historical reconstruction will be the context and working assumptions informing the method of this thesis, and which will direct the literary-critical reading of Genesis in the following chapters.

Summary

It has been the purpose of this chapter to give a different context for reading Genesis in Persian Yehud, and to explicitly state the assumptions and methods that will be used for reading the final form of Genesis. This method is indebted to a new approach of analyzing the HB that considers the *function* of texts in the social and ideological context of Persian Yehud instead of assuming historical *facticity*. Methodologically, this means that texts from that era communicate

³⁶ Jon L. Berquist, "Approaching Yehud" in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period* (ed. Jon L. Berquist; SemeiaSt 50; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 3-4.

more clearly the needs and concerns of the authors of the Yehud elite rather than some ancient history.

The above method is only half of the equation that will be used throughout this study. The second part of the method, which will be described in the next chapter, is an extended comparison of the themes and concerns of Genesis with the themes and concerns of roughly contemporaneous literature in order to see if they cohere in some aspect. The purpose of doing so is to further illuminate the social and intellectual context of Genesis, thereby allowing additional suggestions as to the function of the text within Yehudian society.

Chapter 2: Contemporaneous Literature and Competing Ideology

The purpose of this chapter is to develop further the method for this study by analyzing the themes and concerns of roughly contemporaneous literature and ideologies to Genesis, thereby illuminating the possible social and intellectual context of book. This task is undertaken in order to compare Genesis with other books and ideologies from roughly the same period to see if they cohere or disagree in principle, thereby adding more clarification to the possible ideological context of Genesis. In this chapter we will offer a synopsis of some contemporaneous literature in the HB, Ezra and Nehemiah (with which Genesis ‘agrees’), and some possible *precompositional* myths from outside the HB, *1 Enoch* (with which Genesis ‘disagrees’).³⁷ From that review, and a brief discussion concerning themes in Genesis, we will offer a suggestion as to the message of Ezra-Nehemiah, and subsequently, investigate the apocalyptic worldview, in order that we can establish a possible ideological context for this information, which will ultimately be brought to bear in our analysis of Genesis in subsequent chapters.

Contemporaneous Literature from the Hebrew Bible

In the next chapters as we consider the socio-historical location of Persian Yehud and the possible societal upheaval in Jerusalem, and we attempt a reading identifying the themes and concerns of Genesis within Persian Yehud, we will also attempt to bring these themes and concerns into comparison with roughly contemporaneous literature that demonstrates the same functionality. The purpose of examining the themes of Genesis and suggesting how they might

³⁷ As we will see below, the five booklets that form *1 Enoch* are not all from the same period of time; therefore, as stated in the Introduction, by using *1 Enoch* as “contemporaneous” literature the intention is *not* to suggest that *1 Enoch* in its final form existed during the time of the author(s) of Genesis, but that *precompositional* material may have: a fountainhead of the tradition (a Watchers myth), some cosmological speculation, and a proto-apocalyptic worldview; and these differing religious views may help in analyzing the polemic of Gen 1–11.

function in the societal conflicts of Yehud, and comparing these themes with the concerns and needs of contemporaneous literature is straight forward: if the function of the narratives concerning the Yehud elite in other Persian era books in some way cohere with the interests and concerns of Genesis, “those elite interests can plausibly be construed as the social and intellectual context of the book of Genesis.”³⁸

While comparing contemporaneous literature from similar social groups to understand their functionality can be profitable, in doing so, there is a specific error that needs to be avoided. As stated in the last chapter, in interpreting the narratives of Genesis as edited in the Persian period the purpose is to examine *function* as opposed to *facticity*. Other books from the HB that are also authored in the Persian period, such as Ezra or Nehemiah, and also narrate a ‘history’ of important Jewish figures will be useful in comparing cohering themes and concerns. However, in using these other sources we need to be very cautious against, “switching from skepticism to credulity concerning the biblical literature once it has passed the sixth century BCE.”³⁹ To stay consistent with the approach of pursuing function over facticity, other books in the HB should be useful to the present study if they also reflect the interests of the authors in the Persian period in a manner comparable to the function of Genesis. Therefore, in bringing other books of the HB to this study we will once again focus on *function* to the interests of the Yehud elite in the Persian period rather than *facticity* as a historical narrative.

In pursuing this agenda the goal is not to offer an exhaustively comprehensive analysis of Ezra-Nehemiah—this is ultimately *not* a thesis on Ezra or Nehemiah, and would take us to far afield from our eventual goal—however, demonstrating a serviceable grasp of the main structure,

³⁸ R. C. Heard, *Dynamics of Dislocation: Ambiguity in Genesis 12-36 and Ethnic Boundaries in Post-Exilic Yehud* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2001), 16.

³⁹ Philip Davies, *In Search of ‘Ancient Israel’* (JSOTSup 148; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 82-83.

polemic, and ideas of the Ezra-Nehemiah stories is important as these narratives will play an important role in our analysis of the function of the myths in Genesis 6–35 in chapter 4 of this study. In addition, it is an easier methodological step to first establish one context (Ezra-Nehemiah) and then compare it with the other (Genesis). Also, in this case I believe that Ezra-Nehemiah being more ‘transparent’ with their message is an easier context to establish first. Therefore, as we are pursuing the possible function of these stories in Persian Yehud, we will begin with a synopsis of Ezra and Nehemiah in order to ascertain what the protagonist in each book actually accomplishes, what their concerns are as related in the story, and ultimately, what the ‘message’ or ideological context of the book might be, so that ultimately we may bring that context into conversation with the possible polemic and rhetoric of Genesis in later chapters.⁴⁰

Ezra

The narrative in Ezra can be viewed in two parts: the first, Ezra 1–6, portrays the rebuilding of the temple and has nothing to do with Ezra *per se*; and the second, Ezra 7–10, tells the story of the coming of Ezra from Babylon and his work in Jerusalem, Yehud, and *Abar Nahara*. In the first section, the rebuilding of the temple is told through the perspective of Jewish leaders, their conflict with leaders from surrounding provinces, and the personal involvement and decisions from Persian emperors involving the matter. Ultimately this section ends with the temple being built and rededicated, a functioning purified priesthood, and the people observing Passover.

⁴⁰ Further resources for Ezra/Nehemiah: P. R. Ackroyd, *Israel Under Babylon and Persia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah* (OTL; London: SCM, 1988); R. J. Coggins, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Jacob M. Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (AB 14; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965); Shemaryahu Talmon, “Ezra and Nehemiah” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976); H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Dallas: Word, 1985).

The second section begins with Ezra, “a scribe skilled in the law of Moses that the Lord the God of Israel had given” (Ezra 7:6), and his travel from Babylon to Jerusalem along with priests and Levites. According to the story, Ezra is sent by Artaxerxes to make inquiries about Yehud and Jerusalem according to the law of Ezra’s God, and Artaxerxes also furnishes Ezra with a large financial gift to finance the rites in the house of God in Jerusalem. Ezra is also supposedly chosen by Artaxerxes to “appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River who know the laws of your God; and you shall teach those who do not know them. All who will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed on them, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of their goods or for imprisonment” (Ezra 7:25–26). The narrative then recounts the heads of the families who go with Ezra from Babylon, and reviews the servants and gifts for the temple. After fasting at the river Ahava for protection, Ezra and the exiles return to Jerusalem, and after being there four days offer a burnt offering to the Lord, and deliver the king’s commission to the satraps and the governors of the province Beyond the River.

After these things have been done the story in Ezra takes a drastic turn. Officials approach Ezra and inform him that the people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the land, “Thus the holy seed has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands” (Ezra 9:2). Ezra responds to this news by tearing his garment and mantle, and pulling hair from his head and beard. Ezra then sits appalled at this horrible exogamy until the evening sacrifice. After the sacrifice Ezra offers a prayer to God admitting the people’s guilt in breaking the commandments (plural) even though Ezra explicitly mentions only one, “Do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons” (Ezra 9:12). After Ezra makes his prayer and confession throwing himself down before the temple, an assembly

gathers to him. Shecaniah addresses Ezra—in this context for the assembly—and declares, “We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. So now let us make a covenant with our God to send away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law” (Ezra 10:2–3).

Ezra makes the leading priests, Levites and all Israel swear that they will send away their foreign wives and children, and they do so. A proclamation goes out through the land, to all the returned exiles that they should assemble at Jerusalem. In addition, if any did not come within three days their property should be forfeited, and they will be banned from the assembly of the exiles. When the people gather Ezra declares, “You have trespassed and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. Now make confession to the Lord the God of your ancestors, and do his will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives” (Ezra 10:10–11). According to the story, the people answer with a *qol gadol* (‘loud voice’): “It is so; we must do as you have said... until the fierce wrath of our God on this account is averted from us” (Ezra 10:12–14). Ezra selects officials, heads of families to examine the matter, and the rest of the story of Ezra is a list of those found guilty of marrying foreign women, and who pledge themselves to send away their wives with their children.

In the Ezra story the protagonist completes four tasks: 1) journeying from Babylon to Jerusalem 2) supplying imperial funding for the temple 3) delivering the king’s commission to the satraps and governors 4) eradicating mixed marriages from all the people of Israel. This last task is so important to the Ezra story that when it is complete, his story is complete; at least according to the version of the story we have now: the last verse in Ezra reads, “All these had

married foreign women, and they sent them away with their children” (Ezra 10:44). The focus of the last two chapters in the book of Ezra reflects a serious concern of the author(s) of the book: mixed marriages and the cessation of such unions.

Nehemiah

Like Ezra, the story of Nehemiah begins with the protagonist in Persia—one of the capital cities, Susa—being sent to the province Beyond the River at the behest of the Persian emperor Artaxerxes; however, Nehemiah’s imperial task is different. While Ezra was sent with funding for the temple, Nehemiah is sent with funding for the fortification of the temple gates and Jerusalem’s walls. Nevertheless, though their appointments in Persia to travel to Yehud may differ, Ezra and Nehemiah both face similar confrontations with governors of surrounding sub-provinces trying to delay them in their assigned tasks. Regardless of these delays, upon his return to Jerusalem, Nehemiah inspects the walls and their rebuilding commences.

During the rebuilding of the walls Nehemiah deals with economic disparity in Jerusalem, calls a great assembly in which the problem is addressed, and the priests are made to take an oath to follow through on their promise to restore proper lands, cease the practices of debt slavery, and extreme interest. When the walls are finished being built Nehemiah has the doors set up and appoints the gatekeepers, singers, and Levites. Then Nehemiah assembles the nobles and officials to be enrolled by genealogy according to a book that he finds. A character is drawn from the Ezra source into the Nehemiah story at this point: the scribe and priest, Ezra, who summons the people to obey the Law. Ezra reads to the assembly the words from the book of Moses, and

on the second day instructs the heads of the ancestral houses concerning the Festival of Booths and the people keep the festival for seven days.⁴¹

As in Ezra, the story in Nehemiah takes a drastic turn following these events. The people of Israel assemble with fasting and sackcloth, “Then those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their ancestors” (Neh 9:2). These sins are then reviewed with a synopsis of the disobedience of the Israelites concerning God’s commandments and ordinances given to them, which caused them to be handed over to their enemies and suffer. From this recognition of their culpability concerning God’s law and their deserved punishment, there is a list of those who enter into an oath and a curse. In addition they also sign a covenant, and there is a summary of this covenant document in the story: a) to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord; b) not to give their daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for their sons; c) not to purchase from the people of the land on the Sabbath or a holy day; d) to forego the crops of the seventh year and the extortion of debt; and e) to place on themselves economic obligations to fund the temple. In Nehemiah, this is the covenant of the people with God.

The story in Nehemiah then begins to actualize this covenant with tangible examples. First, there is a list of leaders in Jerusalem and the towns of Yehud, and a list of priests who came to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, and following these lists the city walls are dedicated and the priests *purify* themselves, the people, the gates, and the walls which ends with great sacrifices at the temple and rejoicing. Following the purification of the city and people, temple responsibilities are assigned:

⁴¹ An interesting parallel between Ezra and Nehemiah may lie in the structure of the stories: after observing the religious festival Passover, the Ezra story begins in earnest which basically concerns the eradication of mixed marriages, and here in Nehemiah, after the observance of the religious festival Booths, the story also turns to the issue of exogamy.

On that day men were appointed over the chambers for the stores, the contributions, the first fruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the law for the priests and for the Levites from the fields belonging to the towns; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. They performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon (Neh 12:44–45)

At this point in the narrative then we see point ‘a’ and ‘e’ from the summary of the covenant substantiated in the storyline. The story then turns to the realization of points ‘b’ and ‘c’, and a restatement of ‘e’.

After reading the book of Moses, it was ‘found’ that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the house of God, and “When the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all those of foreign descent” (Neh 13:3). Following this separation, Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem to find Tobiah living in the temple and the people forsaking their duty to the house of God. Nehemiah removes Tobiah, has the chambers cleansed, restores the Levites’ portions, appoints treasurers over the storehouses, and “Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil” (Neh 13:12). After the economic responsibilities to the temple are once again actualized and established, the story turns to the realization of point ‘c’ of the covenant summary: Sabbath practice. Nehemiah notices the people of Jerusalem working on the Sabbath, and foreigners selling food and merchandise to them on the holy day. Nehemiah protests with the nobles of Judah, declares their profaning the Sabbath evil, and commands the Levites to purify themselves and guard the gates that Nehemiah has ordered to be closed as evening approaches before the Sabbath.

Finally, in the Nehemiah story, point ‘b’ from the summary of the covenant is re-enacted once again. Nehemiah sees Jews married to women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab, and half of their children cannot even speak Hebrew. Compared to Ezra’s self-abuse, fasting, and mourning,

Nehemiah's opposition to these mixed marriages is definitely more confrontational: "And I contended with them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair" (Neh 13:25). Nehemiah makes these men take an oath not to marry foreign women which is a "great evil" and a treacherous act against God. Lastly, Nehemiah even chases away the son of the high priest for marrying the daughter of a foreigner.

In the Nehemiah story the protagonist's work is twofold: first he rebuilds the gates of the temple and the city walls under the provision of the Persian emperor. Second, Nehemiah *enforces* the covenant that the people swear to: this begins with Ezra summoning the people to obey the Law, followed by a national confession, from which, supposedly, a group of leaders and priests sign a covenant document. The covenant is summarized in five points: a) to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord; b) not to give their daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for their sons; c) not to purchase from the people of the land on the Sabbath or a holy day; d) to forego the crops of the seventh year and the extortion of debt; and e) to place on themselves economic obligations to fund the temple.

When each of these points is accomplished in the story of Nehemiah they are accompanied by a formula: after restoring lands and ending usury ('d') Nehemiah declares, "Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people" (Neh 5:19). After separating those of foreign descent and establishing temple economic obligations and operations ('b' and 'e') Nehemiah says, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for his service" (Neh 13:14). After commanding the Levites to purify themselves, and to guard the gates of the city, to keep the Sabbath day holy ('c'), Nehemiah says "Remember this also in my favor, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness of your steadfast love" (Neh 13:22). Finally, the book of

Nehemiah ends with a summary of Nehemiah's work to benefit the temple and towards the covenant after chasing away the son of the high priest for his improper union,

Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, the covenant of the priests and the Levites. Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I established the duties of the priests and Levites, each in his work; and I provided for the wood offering, at appointed times, and for the first fruits. *Remember me, O my God, for good* (Neh 13:29–31)

There is a threefold pattern interspersed through the story of the religious reform of Nehemiah in Jerusalem: The covenant is entered, the protagonist Nehemiah enacts and enforces it, and upon doing so he asks God to “remember it to him” for his good.

Ezra-Nehemiah Summary

The purpose of reviewing Ezra and Nehemiah is not to offer a ‘historical’ synopsis, presenting these texts as reliably informing us as to precise events that unfolded in Jerusalem during the reign of Artaxerxes in the fifth century BCE. Philip Davies aptly summarises the problem of ‘relying’ on Ezra-Nehemiah for historical study, but also the reasons we can, to a certain extent, use these books profitably:

The danger here, perhaps, is of falling into the methodological trap that I so strenuously criticized earlier, namely of using the biblical story as a framework for reconstructing history. Indeed, I am of the opinion that many scholarly reconstructions of this Persian society lend too much credence to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Given the well-known muddle and the complicated and as yet unresolved issues of their literary history, one might well wish to accord to these narratives rather less historical value than is usual. The objection is sound and technically correct, and one must, I think, avoid the charge of switching from skepticism to credulity concerning the biblical literature once it has passed the sixth century BCE! There is no particular reason to assume that the process of idealization, the creation of ideal situations and entities, has been abandoned by the writers of these books. However, with the necessary caution afforded, two considerations can be brought to bear on this case. One is that, unlike the case with Iron Age 'Israel', the non-biblical data does to a degree afford confirmation of some of the basic processes described in the biblical narrative at this point. Another is that processes of the kind described in Ezra and Nehemiah would seem

to be necessitated by the subsequent developments in the emergence of Judaeen society and its religion. In other words, there is no problem created by a conflict of literary and archaeological data, nor are the processes described unable to explain the later development of the culture of the province.

Nevertheless, to grant this much is not to assert that the figures of Nehemiah and Ezra are fully historical (the latter perhaps not at all), and certainly not that either achieved all that is credited to him. It is very likely that gradual processes have been foreshortened and ascribed to certain individuals, following the laws of narrative dramatization. It remains valid, nonetheless, to propose on the basis of the biblical *and* non-biblical data that the social conditions appropriate for the emergence of the biblical Israel are to be found in Persian period Yehud.⁴²

Therefore, in analyzing the actions of the protagonists in Ezra and Nehemiah, what they actually do in the story (and why), one can highlight some themes of the books, and possibly, the needs and concerns of the author(s). As to their exploits, Nehemiah and Ezra both come from the heart of the Persian Empire under the auspices and funding of the emperor, one to rebuild the temple and one to rebuild the walls. Furthermore, in the respective books, they both also have social roles. Their social works and deeds have been outlined above, but there is one ‘task’ that they both focus on prominently in their stories, a primary concern: bringing an end to mixed marriages and the sending away of foreign women and their children. Ultimately, we will see if this theme is also in Genesis, and if those elite interests can plausibly be construed as the social and intellectual context of the book of Genesis.

The ‘Message’ of Ezra-Nehemiah in Genesis?

David J. A. Clines in the preface to his book “The Theme of the Pentateuch” writes,

In this book I am arguing that the Pentateuch is a unity—not in origin, but in its final shape. Two centuries of Biblical criticism have trained us to look for unity, if at all, in the Pentateuch’s sources rather than in the final product. I have thought it worthwhile to suggest that it is time that we ignored the sources—hypothetical as

⁴² Philip Davies, *In Search of Ancient ‘Israel’* (JSOTSup 148; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 86.

they are—for a little, and asked what the Pentateuch as a whole is about; that is to say, what is its theme.⁴³

Clines suggests that *the* theme of the Pentateuch (minus Genesis 1–11) is “the partial fulfilment – which implies also the partial non-fulfilment – of the promise to or blessing of the patriarchs.”⁴⁴ I too am suggesting in reading as a unity; but differently than Clines: reading Genesis as a distinct book within a certain socio-historical setting as opposed to reading the Pentateuch as whole. On the one hand, Clines’ hypothesis does have some merit in analyzing Genesis: there is partial fulfilment of God’s promises in the final form of Genesis. Patriarchs do dwell in the Promised Land, they have direct contact and relationship with their God, and they are given progeny (even miraculously). On the other hand, while there are many promises, and some partial fulfilment of those promises, the book does end with the entire patriarchal family in Egypt outside of the Promised Land; therefore, as far as the entirety of Genesis is concerned, there is also partial non-fulfilment of God’s promises as well. However, in addition to Clines’ overarching theme of the Pentateuch, I would suggest at the very least, there are also important sub-themes, motifs, and concerns. Complicated and contingent historical periods will produce complicated and multifaceted texts. Even Clines has to truncate Gen 1–11 from his thesis and break his single theme into three sub-categories: posterity, divine-human relationship, and land.⁴⁵

However, with the context for the recontextualization for Genesis being employed in this study, the length of a book like Genesis, and the complexity of the social situation, perhaps more than one thematic element may be present. For instance, in appealing to the paradigmatic patriarchs of their supposed past the final recontextualization of Genesis answers questions important in Persian Yehud: Who is blessed? Where do appropriate wives come from? What is

⁴³ David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch* (JSOTSup, 10; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978), 7.

⁴⁴ Clines, *Theme of the Pentateuch*, 30.

⁴⁵ The sub-components of Cline’s hypothesis can be construed as important thematic elements for Genesis, especially the posterity component in Gen 12–50.

the appropriate response to mixed marriages? What happens to the wives and children of mixed marriages? Furthermore, if we grant that these stories have ‘developed’ over time, then some of their original themes, while being incorporated into a final recontextualization, may still remain in that final form.⁴⁶

In addition, by analyzing repeated structures, archetypes, and subject matter in Genesis which appear more than once, there appears to be more than one polemical element. For example,

- Priestly concerns (Sabbath, circumcision, food laws: Genesis 1, 9, 17; tithing: Genesis 14, 28; burial practices Genesis 23)
- Covenantal legitimation (the knowledge of good and evil: Genesis 2-5, 8)
- Acceptable/unacceptable marriages, and children of improper union (Genesis 6, 9, 11, 24, 26, 28)
- Personal judgment of Yahweh Elohim (Genesis 3, 4, 6, 11, 19)
- Foreign kings and untainted women (Genesis 12, 20, 26)
- Renaming of patriarchs (Genesis 17, 32)
- Patriarchs coming from the East and divine promises of land (Genesis 12, 19, 28, 30, 31)
- The portrayal and speech acts of women (Genesis 3, 16, 19, 21, 27, 38)
- The elder serving the younger (Genesis 25, 27)
- Satire of the existing political power (Genesis 11, 14, 26, 31)

These concerns which indwell the stories of Genesis will help us arrive at conclusions as to the possible function of the book in the Persian era as opposed to the facticity of the narrative in the patriarchal period; however, whether or not these items can be reduced into a single ‘theme’ is a topic that we will have to return to in the final chapter after having analyzed the textual data using the proposed method.

Of course, using different methods other themes and concerns might be identified; however, for present purposes we are comparing the ideological context of Genesis and other contemporaneous literature in order to ascertain whether the function of the narratives

⁴⁶ For instance, while I will be considering Genesis 1–11 in its final recontextualization there remains possibly enough remnants of its earlier uses that it can be compared to other cosmogonies from the Ancient Near East in a diachronic study that quite reasonably accounts for the textual data.

concerning the Yehud elite in other Persian era books in the HB in some way cohere with the interests and concerns of Genesis. The purpose of doing so is to establish a shared context between the different literatures, which then may mean “those elite interests can plausibly be construed as the social and intellectual context of the book of Genesis.”⁴⁷ Therefore, it is important to first establish one context to compare with the other, and in this case I believe that Ezra-Nehemiah is an easier entry point: the ‘message’ of Ezra-Nehemiah is both simple and, in a sense, complex (especially if redactional theory is considered); however, complex arguments can still be transparent: Grabbe’s synopsis concerning the message of Ezra-Nehemiah is useful,

The story the books of Ezra and Nehemiah together have to tell us is a simple one—one can hardly accuse the compiler of being overly subtle... By saying that the story is simple is not to suggest that there is only a single message or that message does not have its complexity... This is the message in a nutshell; there are several strands to it: God’s providence, the Persian empire as an instrument in God’s hands, the importance of the temple and cult, the continual threat to the nation and religious community by the surrounding peoples. The message is blatant and, consequently, quite effective.⁴⁸

Therefore, if this is the message of Ezra-Nehemiah in a nutshell, then according to the proposed method, this is the ideological context of Genesis and we should be able to find some strands of this message in the myths of that book. In other words, using the proposed method, if the myths in Genesis symbolically represent the social situation in Yehud and appeal to paradigmatic patriarchs as the legitimization for their social and religious innovations then we should find some evidence for this in the recontextualization of Genesis: by commemorating the past the stories in Genesis symbolically use the mythic past to understand and legitimize the present.

In commemorating the past a “community impresses its present identity upon its ‘collective re-presentations’ of its past” and a community “states symbolically what it believes

⁴⁷ Heard, *Dynamics of Diselection*, 16

⁴⁸ Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 101-02.

and wants itself to be.”⁴⁹ This process of social memory is *constructive*; thus, memory formations are not static, immobile forms they are dynamic and unceasing, “because it is wired into the ever-shifting present.”⁵⁰ The understanding for this study is that Genesis demonstrates *hot* memory, and reproduces the constructive memory of the Yehudian elite as they are ‘remembering’ their mythic past for their present purposes. Ultimately, in this type of ‘remembering’ we should be able to find some strands of the message of Ezra-Nehemiah if it is the ideological and social context for the book. Primarily, this ‘message’ of Ezra-Nehemiah will be the focus of our study concerning Genesis 6–35 in chapter 4.

However, the larger intellectual, experiential, and social context of the author(s) of Genesis is not solely represented by the books of the HB—which is one important reason that the selection of the socio-historical setting for interpretation was made and is our boundary for this study—there are other books outside of the HB that also might help in establishing a context for the concerns and needs of the author(s) of Genesis and their recontextualization of the stories therein. For this study another book has been selected, *1 Enoch*, which may represent part of the wider social landscape that the author(s) of Genesis were well aware of, but felt they had to correct with their versions of the myths in Genesis.

Competing Ideology Outside of the HB

By using contemporaneous books to ascertain a context for the ‘message’ of Genesis, not only will literature from the HB be useful, but contemporaneous literature from outside the HB as well. With the proposed method, comparing Genesis with Nehemiah-Ezra is obvious as they narrate the story of persons in Persian Yehud during the socio-historical location selected, and

⁴⁹ Alan Kirk, “Social and Cultural Memory” in *Memory, Tradition, and Text* (A. Kirk and T. Thatcher eds.; Semeia Studies; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 8.

⁵⁰ Kirk, “Social and Cultural Memory”, 1-24, esp. 4-10.

possibly contain the memories of some social, religious, and political conflict. However, another book that may be useful in establishing an interpretive context for Genesis is *1 Enoch*, which represents the beliefs of some Jewish groups in the Second Temple period, and represents a possible ideological conflict with the formative myths of Genesis. Therefore, in this study, not only will Genesis be compared with literature with which it coheres (Ezra-Nehemiah), but with literature that it may ideologically disagree with as well (*1 Enoch*).

For the constructive memories of Genesis or Ezra-Nehemiah to convey meaning to its intended audience those memories would have to operate in a certain cognitive framework. As the salient past functions in the community through commemoration there would be cognitive schemata and nuclear scripts that would have achieved secure status and were important for “interpreting and processing streams of experience.”⁵¹ For the Yehud community some of the texts that eventually became the HB were used to provide the framework for the experience of the present through the remembering past. However, it may be that other sacred texts or myths, and a different remembered history might have also functioned in a similar manner for a group of persons living in Yehud.

An assumption of scholars pertaining to the new perspective on Yehud as a Persian colony with a diverse population is, “The community of Yehud was not unified but experienced substantial social conflict. This included diverse opinions about the construction and function of the Second Temple as well as cultic practices.”⁵² In the next chapter “Reading Genesis 1–11 in Persian Yehud”, the apocalyptic *1 Enoch*, and the apocalypticism which stood behind such literature will be compared with Genesis, and this comparison may give us a better understanding of some of the polemic the author(s) of Genesis employed in their

⁵¹ Kirk, “Social and Cultural Memory,” 15.

⁵² Jon L. Berquist, “Approaching Yehud,” 3-4.

recontextualization of their paradigmatic myths concerning the social conflict relating to religious matters. In that analysis, *1 Enoch* is an important text, and is useful for providing a different context for understanding Genesis from another social and ideological location, thereby, affecting the conclusions reached concerning Genesis. This is not to suggest that *1 Enoch* in its final form existed during the time of the author(s) of Genesis, but *precompositional* myths may have: a fountainhead of the tradition (a Watchers myth), some cosmological speculation, and an apocalyptic worldview; and these may help in understanding the polemic of Genesis 1–11.

The recontextualization of Genesis 1–11 in Persian Yehud within the context of diverse opinions about religious and cultic practices consists of pro-covenantal material and anti-Enochic polemic,⁵³ and this rhetoric provides the structure and argumentation for the primordial narrative. Therefore, to understand how the recontextualization of the myths in Genesis may have functioned in the religious conflicts of Persian Yehud, it is important to have some background information on *1 Enoch*; the fountainhead myth of the Enochic tradition; and the ideology of apocalypticism before we bring that ideological context into conversation with the rhetoric and polemic of Genesis 1–11, in order to see how the competing religious ideologies might be at odds.

⁵³ The term “pro-covenantal” is used to describe the ideology of the Yehudian elite they would support, and the term “anti-Enochic” is used to describe a religious ideology—whether it is proto-apocalyptic or precompositional—that the social elite disagreed with as part of their religious reform in Yehud. They may be imperfect terms, but at the very least, they describe being ‘for’ an ideology, or ‘against’ one. These competing religious ideologies may have developed over time; the people of the land may have had religious elements handed down to them from their ancestors or appropriated myths from other cultures; the returning elite may have experienced some level of religious syncretism in Persia; however, the point in this study is not to trace their development, but to see how they may be at odds in Genesis 1–11.

1 *Enoch*

In 1947 a young shepherd boy threw a rock into a small cave opening, and upon hearing the resulting sound of shattering pottery accidentally made one of the greatest manuscript discoveries of his century: the Dead Sea Scrolls. Over the course of the next few years many other manuscripts were found in several nearby caves which eventually totalled more than nine hundred texts. At the same time as the scrolls were rapidly being discovered in the caves of the Judean wilderness the ruins of Khirbet Qumran were being excavated; a site that housed the community responsible for copying and authoring the scrolls. These discoveries revolutionized biblical and historical studies, Second Temple Judaism studies, and theories of how texts were copied and transmitted during the period.

The texts discovered in the Qumran caves and in the surrounding area have subsequently been divided into two different categories: *biblical* and *non-biblical* scrolls. In these groups are two-hundred and twenty-two biblical scrolls and six-hundred and seventy non-biblical scrolls.⁵⁴ The biblical scrolls discovered have been extremely important for the study of the HB and Old Testament (OT) which shed light on the textual transmission of the HB and the authority of different texts during the Second Temple Period. The non-biblical scrolls have also been invaluable in the years since their discovery in shedding light on Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. Among the very significant discoveries at Qumran in the non-biblical scrolls were many manuscripts of *1 Enoch*. Previously, this book was part of a collection often identified as ‘Pseudepigraphal’. However, with its discovery at Qumran and subsequent dating using different methodologies, scholars realized that the ideology it contained probably was

⁵⁴ James VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), 103.

indicative of earlier groups within Judaism before the Qumranites, and very likely was considered a sacred text for those groups.

George Nickelsburg describes *1 Enoch* as “arguably the most important text in the corpus of Jewish literature from the Hellenistic and Roman periods.”⁵⁵ R. H. Charles in discussing the significance of *1 Enoch* writes, “To the biblical scholar and to the student of Jewish and Christian theology *1 Enoch* is the most important Jewish work written between 200 BC and 100 AD.”⁵⁶ Gabriele Boccaccini proposes that the Essenes at Qumran emerged from an Enochic Judaism influenced by compilations such as *1 Enoch*.⁵⁷ For hundreds of years it appears *1 Enoch* and other Enochic literature may have significantly influenced the biblical interpretation and worldview of some groups in Judaism, the first followers of Jesus, and early forms of Christianity in ways comparable to few texts outside of the biblical canon.

Scholars suggest that parts of *1 Enoch* might be some of the oldest Jewish writings outside of the HB with most dating the five booklets that comprise *Enoch* from the fourth century BCE to the turn of the Common Era.⁵⁸ Early rabbinic Judaism rejected *1 Enoch*, and similar apocalyptic texts, after the catastrophes of the first and second Jewish rebellions. Eventually, not only rabbinic Judaism rejected the Enochic works but almost all forms of Christianity as well. *1 Enoch* was lost for many centuries, and ironically, until Qumran, the booklets which are obviously Jewish in origin were known only through their transmission by and preservation in Christian sources⁵⁹ until Scottish explorer James Bruce brought three

⁵⁵ George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 1-36; 81-108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 1.

⁵⁶ R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch: Translated from the Editor's Ethiopic Text and Edited with an Enlarged Introduction, Notes and Indexes, Together with a Reprint of the Greek Fragments* (Escondido, CA: The Book Tree, 2000), vi.

⁵⁷ Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

⁵⁸ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 1.

⁵⁹ Michael A. Knibb, “Christian Adoption and Transmission of Jewish Pseudepigrapha: The Case of 1

manuscripts back from Ethiopia in 1773.⁶⁰ The full version of *1 Enoch* that we now use is indebted to the Ethiopic version discovered by Bruce.

Among the many manuscripts discovered at Qumran were eleven copies of *1 Enoch*; perhaps even up to twenty with some Greek fragments that have recently been identified as Enochian.⁶¹ With the discovery of these Enoch texts among other ancient sacred texts scholars realized the booklets that comprised *1 Enoch* were older than originally believed from the Ethiopic canon.⁶² Furthermore, subsequent study of *1 Enoch* has led scholars to realize the book's importance in understanding the probable Essene community who lived at Qumran,⁶³ and the influence of *1 Enoch* on second Temple Judaism and the worldview of many NT authors.

Enoch," *JSJ* XXXII, no. 4 (2001): 396-415.

⁶⁰ Daniel Olson, *Enoch: A New Translation* (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2004), 3.

⁶¹ VanderKam and Flint, *Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 316-19. This manuscript count would also include another Enochic text the *Book of Giants* which, though not in the modern *1 Enoch* corpus, may have been a part of an 'Enochic Pentateuch' at Qumran.

⁶² Margaret Barker, *The Lost Prophet: The Book of Enoch and its Influence on Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1988), 1.

⁶³ Flint and VanderKam suggest nine criteria by which to determine the authority of any book at Qumran. VanderKam and Flint, *Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 172-80. The third criterion they suggest is the quantity of manuscripts that have been recovered. The manuscript evidence for *1 Enoch* from Qumran:

Manuscript	Paleographic Date	Section Preserved
4QEn ^a	Archaic (200-150 BCE)	BW
4QEn ^b	Hasmonean (c. 150 BCE)	BW
4QEn ^c	Herodian (30-1 BCE)	BW, AA, 104, "Noah's Birth"
4QEn ^d	Herodian (30-1 BCE)	BW, AA
4QEn ^e	Hasmonean (100-50 BCE)	BW, AA
4QEn ^f	Hasmonean (150-125 BCE)	AV
4QEn ^g	Herodian (c. 50 BCE)	ch. 91, EE
4QEnastr ^a	Archaic (c.200 BCE)	
4QEnastr ^b	Herodian (early first century CE)	
4QEnastr ^c	Hasmonean (c. 50 BCE)	
4QEnastr ^d	Hasmonean/Herodian (50-1 BCE)	

See Lawrence Schiffman and James C. VanderKam, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2 vols; Oxford: University Press, 2000); Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 9–10. Before the manuscript discoveries a primary question concerning the Enochic material was whether the original documents were written in Hebrew or Aramaic. The manuscript evidence from Qumran has clearly answered that question: Aramaic was the language these stories were written in, or at the very least, for the sections that have been found. There are some interesting items of note from the Enochic manuscripts at Qumran. First, the BL is always written on its own scroll. Second, the SE which comprises the second section of *1 Enoch* in the Ethiopic corpus is not found at Qumran. Instead, another work, the *Book of Giants* (BG), seems to occupy this place in the corpus. Milik suggests that BG along with BW, BL, BD, EE comprised an Enochic Pentateuch at Qumran. While this suggestion has not received unequivocal support, *1 Enoch* does appear to have been transmitted in a form of five books through time, so his proposal is not outside of the realm of possibility.

1 *Enoch* is not a book, rather it is a compilation of books consisting of five distinct sections totalling one-hundred and eight chapters: the *Book of the Watchers* (chs. 1–36; hereafter BW) describes the fall of the watchers (angelic beings), and Enoch's guided travels throughout the heavens and hell; the *Similitudes* also called the *Parables* (chs. 37–71; hereafter SE) consists of three parables given to Enoch; the *Book of the Luminaries* (chs. 72–82; hereafter BL) gives a description of the sun and moon according to a solar calendar; the *Book of Dreams* (chs. 83–90; hereafter BD) consists of two dream revelations Enoch received before walking with God; and the *Epistle of Enoch* (chs. 91–108; hereafter EE) which gives a series of farewell addresses from Enoch to Methuselah and his other sons.⁶⁴

Identifying the 'author' of these booklets is a tricky issue as the collection shows the obvious hallmarks of redaction and multiple authors. For example, Milik suggests that the BL could just as easily come from Samaritan priests as Judean priests.⁶⁵ He also argues on the evidence of the excellent knowledge of Jerusalem that the author of the BW was a Jerusalemite.⁶⁶ Nickelsburg believes that the accurate place names from upper Galilee might suggest a northern provenance for chapters 6–16. Ultimately, a complete diachronic and source study of 1 *Enoch* is outside the scope of this study; at this point it is enough to note that a strong argument can be made that the development of the Enoch corpus was lengthy, involved a series of sources, and may have involved more than one author in a manner similar to Genesis.

Recently, several fragments from cave seven have also been identified as Enochic. Wilhelm Nebe and Emile Puech propose that 7Q4.1, 7Q4.2, 7Q8, 7Q11, 7Q12, 7Q13, and 7Q14 all belong to a Greek translation of EE and provide a new classification for these previously unidentified fragments: pap7QEn gr. In total then, there are seven manuscripts that contain parts of BW, AA, and EE; four manuscripts that contain only BL; nine manuscripts containing BG; and one possible Greek manuscript of EE equalling twenty-one manuscripts. This amount of literature indicates the importance of the Enochic material for the Qumranites.

⁶⁴ Olson, *Enoch*, 10-17.

⁶⁵ Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 9-10.

⁶⁶ Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, 26.

A primary influence on the material is priestly concerns (both positive and negative) which are reflected in the calendrical material and speculative wisdom concordant with a priestly origin.⁶⁷ Reeves and Boccaccini both recognize, “that the figure of Enoch and most Enochic literature have deep roots in priestly traditions,” and that “speculative cosmogonical and cosmological wisdom characteristic of the earliest layers of our extant Enochic sources...should be associated with the intermediate redactional stages of the pentateuchal source labeled by modern source critics as the Priestly or P source.”⁶⁸ While the roots of the Enochic material may be priestly, in its final synchronic form, which came to Qumran, the books are tied together by theodicy, apocalypticism, a deterministic worldview which finds full expression in the calendrical material, and devotion to the figure of Enoch as the primary figure of divine revelation. The subject of apocalypticism will be more thoroughly examined below, and brought into conversation with the covenantalism of the author(s) of Genesis in the next chapter; however, before doing so, a discussion of the possible fountainhead of the Enochic tradition will be beneficial.

The Fountainhead of the Enochic Tradition

The relationship between the book of Genesis and literature in the Enochic corpus is tangible, and examining some of the theories concerning the possible connection between the two books will allow us to continue considering context, meaning, method, and interpretations of Genesis. The reason the association between the books appears obvious is they both contain

⁶⁷ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 67.

⁶⁸ John C. Reeves, “Complicating the Notion of an “Enochic Judaism,”” in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (G. Boccaccini ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 373-83, esp. 376-77. There are some interesting questions that could be pursued here. If the roots of this material are priestly, and Ezra-Nehemiah are trying to institute innovative religious practices: what type of priests were in the land during the exile? What kind of religion was practiced? What kind of religious conflict may have existed between the returnees and the 'Am-Ha'aretz?

some of the same characters and relate similar stories. One of the ‘same’ myths both works include is the Sons of God/Watchers narrative. A brief review of some models of interpretation regarding these passages, and following some of the same questions of interpretation that were analyzed in the last chapter, will help focus our study on the relationship between Genesis and *1 Enoch*, and the possible connection or ideological backgrounds that might inform both works.

In understanding the incorporation of this myth in Genesis, the first question often pursued is suggesting a solution to the identity of the *bene ha'elohim*.⁶⁹ However, as opposed to Gen 6:1–4, this question is much easier to determine concerning *1 Enoch* as it has a much clearer description: the Watchers, the sons of heaven, are angels who transgress the laws and boundaries of the creator and must be punished.

When the sons of men had multiplied, in those days, beautiful and comely daughters were born to them. And the watchers, the sons of heaven, saw them and desired them. And they said to one another, “Come let us choose for ourselves wives from the daughters of men, and let us beget children for ourselves.” And Shemihazah, their chief said to them, “I fear that you will not want to do this deed, and I alone shall be guilty of a great sin.” And they answered him and said, “Let us all swear an oath...” Then they all swore together and bound one another with a curse. And there were, all of them, two hundred, who descended in the days of Jared onto the peak of Mount Hermon (*1 En.* 6:1–6)

In addition, *1 Enoch* is also explicit concerning the offspring of the angels and their human wives, “These and all the others with them took for themselves wives from among them such as they chose. And they began to go into them, and to defile themselves through them... And they

⁶⁹ For Genesis, interpretation has revolved around three main options: 1) The *bene ha'elohim* as angels or divine beings. 2) The *bene ha'elohim* as sacral kings or judges. 3) The *bene ha'elohim* representing the line of Seth. See also James McKeown, *Genesis* (THOTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 48-9, who lists further possibilities including “dramatis personae” from Israel’s neighbors or condemnation of the fertility cults. Likely the first Greek copies of LXX Genesis used the phrase οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ to translate בני־האלהים. However, some later additions use οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ (e.g. Codex Alexandrinus [A; 5th cent.]). See Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 116-17, n 84, n 85; David R. Jackson, *Enochic Judaism: Three Defining Exemplars* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 74-78. The assumption in this work moving forward is that in some way Genesis 6 contains a myth in which the conceptual framework considered the *bene ha'elohim* as spiritual/divine beings that procreated with the daughters of men.

conceived from them and bore to them great giants” (1 En 7:1–2). 1 En 15 is even clearer: “Why have you forsaken the high heaven, the eternal sanctuary; and lain with women, and defiled yourselves with the daughters of men; and taken for yourselves wives, and done as the sons of the earth; and begotten for yourselves sons, giants? You were holy ones and spirits, living forever” (1 En 15:3–4). While there are suggestions as to whom the angels may be metaphorically representing,⁷⁰ the identification of the male half of the relationship is straightforward literarily: angels are the *bene ha'elohim*. However, while it appears that the story of the angels descending may be clear, it also seems that this story may have undergone a process of development.

Diachronic Methods and the Fountainhead Myth

As mentioned above, the books of Enoch also bear significant hallmarks of developing over a period of time: “To describe in short compass the Book of Enoch is impossible. It comes from many writers and almost as many periods.”⁷¹ However, while the books may have developed and been authored or redacted in different times, some of the Enochic myths tell a similar story—the descent of the holy ones—with only some minor differences. The BW is the first book that tells of the descent of the angels, but the SE and the BD also include the myth.⁷² Following the angel-human interbreeding in the BW, the archangel Raphael is commissioned to imprison Asael and throw him in an opening in the wilderness and cover him with darkness, and “On the great day of judgement, he [Asael] will be led away to the burning conflagration” (1 En10:6). At the same time in the BW the archangel Michael is commissioned to imprison

⁷⁰ For example, Nickelsburg suggest that they represent the Διάδοχοι, a group of warring Greek generals, see below, page 57-58.

⁷¹ R. H. Charles, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (vol. 2; Bellingham, WA: Logos, 2004), 163.

⁷² Other Enochic books also include a version of the myth that presuppose the angelic descent story (e.g., the birth of Noah 1 En 106-7)

Shemihazah and his associates in the valleys of the earth until the day of their judgement, “Then they will be led away to the fiery abyss, and to the torture, and to the prison where they will be confined forever (1 En 10:13). In the BW when Enoch ascends to heaven he sees the terrible and fearful prison for the angels where they will be confined forever (1 En 21:7–10).

Other Enochic booklets also tell similar versions of this myth. The SE truncates the descent of the Watchers myth even more significantly than Genesis, but still conveys a clear understanding of the divine perpetrators, “In those days, sons of the chosen and holy were descending from the highest heaven, and their seed was becoming one with the sons of men” (1 En 39:1). However, while the descent myth of the Watchers is severely shortened in this version there is still much focus on the punishment of the rebel angels (1 En 54:1–6; 56:1–4). In the BD the story of the Watchers is told in an allegorical form in which the Watchers are stars who take the form of bulls and mate with cows who conceive elephants, camels, and asses (1 En 86:1–6). Similar to the other versions of the story, the angels who transgressed are thrown into an abyss full of fire on the day of judgement (1 En 90:24). Ultimately, there are some slight variations in the way the myth is told, but there seems to be a *common framework* informing the reiterations of the myth: the angels descend, they intermingle improperly with humankind, they are bound and put in some sort of holding prison, and finally they are brought before God on the day of judgement and cast into an abyss for eternity. In commenting on this common framework Nickelsburg states that “This story about the rebellion of the angels (“the watchers”) and their judgment is the nucleus and fountainhead of the traditions in chapters 1–36 and is presumed throughout.”⁷³ As we will consider below and in the next chapter, it may be this “fountainhead” that is behind some of the polemic contained in Gen 1–11.

⁷³ George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Literary and Historical Introduction* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 47.

While there may be a common framework to the myth, diachronic analysis also highlights some major differences. With the possible exception of the BL the oldest material in *1 Enoch* may be chs. 6–11, and this section includes a story about the rebellion of the angels. However, this formative narrative contains *two different* versions. In the one, the angels' leader is Shemihazah (whom Milik calls their 'king') who directs an angelic descent in which the Watchers take human wives and have giant progeny. In the other version, Asael (whom Milik describes as a 'sage') sins by teaching humans knowledge that they should not have.⁷⁴ Nickelsburg concludes that the original story is “about the rebellion and punishment of the angelic chieftain, Shemihazah, his subordinates, and their progeny, the giants” (which is the “fountainhead” above), and the material concerning the illicit teachings of Asael is a secondary addition to the story.⁷⁵

This is not the place to discuss all of the issues concerning the textual development of *1 Enoch* and diachronic theories concerning its transmission. The above brief synopsis entailing a few minor textual data is merely meant to highlight that the booklets of *1 Enoch* underwent a period of transmission, editing, and redaction similar to some theories pertaining to Genesis. The important point, and one we will return to below, is that there is a *common story*—a *fountainhead*—behind the stories being told in *1 Enoch*, and these stories are being reiterated by different authors over many years, possibly hundreds of years: *Jubilees*,⁷⁶ Philo,⁷⁷ Josephus,⁷⁸ the

⁷⁴ John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 49-50. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 165.

⁷⁵ Nickelsburg, *Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 48. Nickelsburg also offers an instructive outline of the different strata in *1 Enoch* 6–11. For the details of this analysis and a chart outlining the primary material and secondary additions see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 165–68.

⁷⁶ *Jubilees* 5:1, “When mankind began to multiply on the surface of the entire earth and daughters were born to them, the angels of the Lord — in a certain (year) of this jubilee — saw that they were beautiful to look at. So they married of them whomever they chose. They gave birth to children for them and they were giants.” Translation by James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Translation* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 511; Scriptores Aethiopici 88. Louvain: Peeters, 1989).

Dead Sea Scrolls,⁷⁹ and early Christian writers such as Iranaeus,⁸⁰ Justin,⁸¹ Athenagoras,⁸²

Clement of Alexandria,⁸³ Tertullian,⁸⁴ and Origen⁸⁵ all believed the sons of God in Genesis 6 to

⁷⁷ “ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὅτι καλαί εἰσιν, ἔλαβον ἑαυτοῖς γυναῖκας ἀπὸ πασῶν, ὧν ἐξελέξαντο” “And when the angels of God saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful, they took unto themselves wives of all of them whom they chose.” Interestingly Philo asserts, “Those beings, whom other philosophers call demons, Moses usually calls angels; and they are souls hovering in the air.” Philo also concludes that as the earth is filled with land animals and the sea with aquatic so to, “the heaven containing the stars: for these also are entire souls pervading the universe, being unadulterated and divine.” It would be interesting to further study Philo’s understanding of the unseen beings of air and the divine stars in correlation with the Watchers myth. Philo of Alexandria and Charles Duke Yonge, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 152.

⁷⁸ “Whereby they made God to be their enemy, for many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength; for the tradition is, That these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants.” Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996) Antiquities I, iii 1.

⁷⁹ *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* are among the cache of scrolls found in the Judean wilderness therefore by default the DSS include this view. However, one could also add the Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen) in which Lamech suspects that his son Noah may be a product of a union between one of the Watchers and his wife Bitenosh 2:1-18.

⁸⁰ In his discussion of circumcision and the Decalogue he writes, “Enoch, too, pleasing God, without circumcision, discharged the office of God’s legate to the angels although he was a man, and was translated, and is preserved until now as a witness of the just judgment of God, because the angels when they had transgressed fell to the earth for judgment, but the man who pleased [God] was translated for salvation.” Iranaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.2.

⁸¹ “For the truth shall be spoken; since of old these evil demons, effecting apparitions of themselves, both defiled women and corrupted boys, and showed such fearful sights to men, that those who did not use their reason in judging of the actions that were done, were struck with terror; and being carried away by fear, and not knowing that these were demons, they called them gods, and gave to each the name which each of the demons chose for himself” Justin, *1 Apology* 5.2. Justin then must defend himself from Trypho concerning the blasphemous statement that, “angels sinned and revolted from God,” and goes about doing so with a series of biblical quotes as evidence proving that wicked angels have revolted from God. Philo, *Dialogue with Trypho*, LXXIX.

⁸² In a chapter titled, *Concerning the Angels and Giants* he writes, “Some, free agents, you will observe, such as they were created by God, continued in those things for which God had made and over which He had ordained them; but some outraged both the constitution of their nature and the government entrusted to them: namely, this ruler of matter and its various forms, and others of those who were placed about this first firmament... these fell into impure love of virgins, and were subjugated by the flesh, and he became negligent and wicked in the management of the things entrusted to him. Of these lovers of virgins, therefore, were begotten those who are called giants.” Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians*, XXIV.

⁸³ “An example of this are the angels, who renounced the beauty of God for a beauty which fades, and so fell from heaven to earth.” Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor (Paedagogus)*, III.ii. Clements belief in the literal union of angels and humans is also critiqued by Photios, patriarch of Constantinople in the 9th century, and his criticism of Clements’ now lost *Hypotyposes*. Photios writes among his charges of heresy concerning the work, “Like in a dream, he believes that angels have sexual encounters with women and have children.” Piotr Ashin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria on Trial: The Evidence of "Heresy" from Photius' Bibliotheca* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 145.

⁸⁴ “One proposition I lay down: that those angels, the deserters from God, the lovers of women, were likewise the discoverers of this curious art, on that account also condemned by God.” *On Idolatry*, IX. On Gen 6:1–4. See also Tertullian, *De Idol.* 9; *De Habit. Mul.* 2; *De Cultu Femin.* 10; *De Vel. Virg.* 7; *Apolog.* 22. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson and A. Cleveland Coxe, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. III: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 470, n. 862.

⁸⁵ Of the names mentioned here Origen’s inclusion is the most tentative. In *Contra Celsus* he writes, “But, that we may grant to him in a spirit of candour what he has not discovered in the contents of the book of Genesis,

be divine beings who in one form or another pro-created with the daughters of men.⁸⁶ While the New Testament (NT) never directly quotes Genesis 6:1–4 it seems plausible that 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 may be highly influenced by the book of *1 Enoch*.⁸⁷ Ultimately, from a variety of sources, it appears that a widespread interpretation in the Second Temple period and beyond for many interpreters (though not all) understood the “sons of God” in some sense as angelic beings and fathers of giants.

We can see quite clearly that this particular myth was ubiquitous during the Second Temple period, but an important question remains for this study: how old is the myth? In recognizing that there seems to be a common myth which has been retold over many years scholars have offered different theories to account for this development, and the possible relationship of the common Enochic myths outside of Genesis and their relationship to the book. To use our categories from the last chapter, the above synopsis concerning the Sons of God myth demonstrates the *compositional* and *recontextual* stage of interpretation. This then does leave us with a problem for this study: the final form of *1 Enoch* likely follows in date the final form of Genesis. However, because of the socio-historical context we have selected we may pursue a

that “the sons of God, seeing the daughters of men, that they were fair, took to them wives of all whom they chose,” we shall nevertheless even on this point persuade those who are capable of understanding the meaning of the prophet, that even before us there was one who referred this narrative to the doctrine regarding souls, which became possessed with a desire for the corporeal life of men, and this in metaphorical language, he said, was termed “daughters of men.” But whatever may be the meaning of the “sons of God desiring to possess the daughters of men,” it will not at all contribute to prove that Jesus was not the only one who visited mankind as an angel, and who manifestly became the Saviour and benefactor of all those who depart from the flood of wickedness.” *Contra Celsus*, V.LV. In this section Origen also says that Celsus quoted from the Book of Enoch without understanding, but because of Origen’s allegorical interpretations, and recognizing that his purpose in this book was primarily to falsify Celsus’s arguments, it is difficult to definitively identify the literalness of this story for Origen. See James C. VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (J. C. VanderKam and W. Adler, eds; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 33-101, here 81-82.

⁸⁶ Wenham, *Genesis 1 – 15*, 139.

⁸⁷ Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity*, 106. While it is not the purpose of this thesis to explore the connections between *1 Enoch* and the books of the NT the presupposition here is that at least *some* of the authors of the NT understood angelic activity similar to *1 Enoch* and would have likely read Genesis and similar myths accordingly.

different question: is there a *precompositional* stage of context in the myths of *1 Enoch* that might be brought into conversation with the *recontextualized* myths of Genesis. We will now turn to some theories concerning a precompositional context and consider how it might affect an understanding of Genesis.

1 *Enoch and the Compositional and Recontextual Stages of Interpretation*

Since the discovery of the DSS, and the subsequent realization of the antiquity and authority of *1 Enoch* for some groups during the Second Temple period, every modern commentator has noticed a connection between *1 Enoch* and Genesis 5–9; nevertheless, they are faced with a problem: which came first, Genesis or *1 Enoch*? Philip Davies notes, “Scholarly orthodoxy prefers the conclusion that the stories in Enoch are an expansion of the Genesis text.”⁸⁸ R. H. Charles sums up this view succinctly, “The entire myth of the angels and the daughters of men in Enoch springs originally from Gen 6:1–4 where it is said the ‘sons of God’ came in to the daughters of men.”⁸⁹ Nickelsburg agrees that “the Enochic text is, in some sense, an interpretation of Genesis,”⁹⁰ and Collins also believes that *1 Enoch* 6–16 “is an elaboration of the story of the ‘sons of God’ in Genesis 6.”⁹¹ Nickelsburg offers an example of how this type of method works,

The events of the last days (the author’s own time) mirror the events of primordial times. At the time of the flood, God judged a wicked earth and its inhabitants and started things anew. Once again the world has gone askew, but judgment is imminent and a new age will begin. Within the framework of this typological scheme, the variations from the biblical text may be read as reflections of the author’s purposes and of the events and circumstances of the author’s own time...

⁸⁸ Philip R. Davies, “And Enoch Was Not, For Genesis Took Him,” in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb* (C. Hempel and J. M. Lieu eds.; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 100.

⁸⁹ R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch: Together With a Reprint of the Greek Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912), 14.

⁹⁰ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 166.

⁹¹ John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 38.

Our author is making a statement about the nature of contemporary evil and about its obliteration. This evil is more than the wicked deeds of violent people. Behind the mighty of the earth stand demonic powers. Given the supernatural origins of this evil, only God and God's heavenly agents can annihilate it... Given this qualification, a possible setting appears to be the Diadochian wars. Alexander's conquests had begun a period of war and bloodshed. The large number of the Diadochi, the repeated campaigns in Palestine, and the multiplicity of wars and assassinations provide a suitable context for the descriptions of the battles of the giants—their devastation of the earth and humanity and their destruction of one another. Within this context, the myth of supernatural procreation may be read as a parody of the claims of divine procreation attached to certain of the Diadochi. The author would be saying, yes, the parentage of the “giants” is supernatural, but their fathers are demons and rebels against heaven.⁹²

In this case, Nickelsburg is *recontextualizing* the myth for a new socio-historical setting in the Hellenistic period. In his argument, the Genesis material is expanded, and the synchronic meaning of the final form of *1 Enoch* is understood through the social upheaval and political conflict during the wars of the Diadochi. It is certainly within the realm of possibility that Nickelsburg may be correct as to the historical and ideological location he has selected to make sense of the later *recontextual* Enochic elaborations of Gen 6:1–4, or a common myth, and if this is the case, there would certainly be many interesting and relevant questions to pursue pertaining to the authority, transmission, and interpretation of sacred texts during this Hellenistic time period.

However, as the goal of this study is to locate a synchronic understanding of the recontextualization of Genesis within the conflicts of Persian Yehud, then a later *recontextualization* of *1 Enoch* in the Hellenistic period does not provide the needed theory or data for such an endeavour. Material from Genesis (or a common myth) expanded in the Hellenistic period simply does not help us concerning Genesis' recontextualization in the Persian period. The question here is: why was this story possibly told in Genesis' particular manner in

⁹² Nickelsburg, *Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 49. See also Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 170–71.

the social and religious conflicts of Yehud? With that question in mind, there is another scholarly hypothesis concerning the relationship of the Enochic material and Genesis that is more profitable for locating a different ideological context and relationship between these two books, and significantly provides a different possible ‘meaning’ for Gen 1–11. This theory will move us to the *precompositional* context for interpretation.

1 Enoch, Gen 6:1–4, and the Precompositional Stage of Interpretation

Traditionally, many scholars who have worked on Genesis and use diachronic methods suggest that the ‘torso’ of an ANE myth has been edited and demythologized by the redactor of Genesis.⁹³ There is a similar view concerning Gen 6:1–4 and the truncation of an older myth, but with a different starting point: an Enochic myth concerning the descent of the Watchers is the edited ‘source’ for Gen 6:1–4. In his pioneering work on the Aramaic fragments of *1 Enoch* from Qumran, J. T. Milik, suggested that *1 Enoch* 6–11 actually was the *older* story and presupposed by Gen 6:1–4, “The ineluctable solution, it seems to me, is that the text of Gen. 6:1–4, which, by its abridged and allusive formulation, deliberately refers back to our Enochic document, two or three phrases of which it quotes verbatim.”⁹⁴ Milik’s theory has been seconded by Margaret Barker who writes, “The myth as it appears in Genesis has been well and truly sterilised.”⁹⁵

Up to this point, then, there are two options for considering the relationship of the books we have been discussing: one, *1 Enoch* is an interpretation or expansion of Gen 6:1–4; or two,

⁹³ Wellhausen famously described the passage as a “cracked erratic boulder.” Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (New York: Meridian, 1957), 317. Gunkel suggested bluntly, “This piece is a torso. It can hardly be called a story.” Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (trans. M-E. Biddle; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 59. Skinner describes the passage as “Obscure and obviously fragmentary narrative.” John Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC 1; London: T & T Clark, 1930), 139. Von Rad did not specify a provenance for the myth, but still figured, “The impression that here older material could have been radically revised subsequently is now strengthened.” Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 114-15.

⁹⁴ Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, 31.

⁹⁵ Margaret Barker, “Some Reflections upon the Enoch Myth,” *JSOT* 15 (1980): 7-29, here 22.

Gen 6:1–4 is a deliberate editing of the Watchers myth. However, Michael Black offers a slightly more nuanced possibility when he suggests that Gen 6 and *1 En* 6 are descended from a common literary ancestor.⁹⁶ Philip Davies advocates this position but mitigates it slightly by referring to an earlier Enochic ‘story’ as opposed to a ‘source’ or ‘literary ancestor’; this approach would suggest a *precompositional* assumption. Davies states, “If Gen 6:1–4 is a truncated version of an earlier and fuller story, as seems to be the best explanation, then the fuller story known to the writers (and readers) of Genesis was probably also known to the writers of the Enoch text.”⁹⁷ Davies then argues that the writers of *1 Enoch* would not have expanded brief allusions in Genesis when they could “utilize the fuller story to which these allusions point.”⁹⁸ Milik, Black, Barker, and Davies all suspect the same thing concerning Gen 6:1–4 as source and tradition scholars: the Sons of God myth in Genesis has been truncated to conceal context and content; however, they just argue from a completely different starting point. For earlier scholars it was ANE myths, for these later scholars it is an Enochic myth, either a literary source (*compositional* or *recontextual*) or common myth (*precompositional*).

Furthermore, the fountainhead myth is not the only section of Genesis 1–11 that has compelled some scholars to suggest that possibly proto-apocalyptic influences may pre-date the final recontextualization of Genesis. In commenting on Genesis 5:23 J. T. Milik believed, “An indirect allusion is already to be found in Gen. 5:23, where the writer, having fixed the age of the patriarch at 365 years, implies, in guarded terms, the existence of astronomical works circulating under the name of Enoch.”⁹⁹ Von Rad argued that the Genesis Enoch pericope offered, “The impression of being only a brief reference to a much more extensive tradition; it is an open

⁹⁶ Michael Black, *The Book of Enoch* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 124-25.

⁹⁷ Davies, “And Enoch Was Gone,” 100.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 8.

question, therefore, whether much of the apocalyptic Enoch tradition is not really very old and precedes in time (not follows) the priestly narrative.”¹⁰⁰ To this argument von Rad would add upon commenting on the Gen 6:1–4 narrative, “The impression that here older material could have been radically revised subsequently is now strengthened.”¹⁰¹ A persistent question in the minds of some scholars is whether or not some form of proto-apocalyptic Enochic traditions actually pre-date the final form of Genesis.

Once again, the proposal that *1 Enoch* is a later expansion of Gen 6:1–4 does not provide much meaning for the recontextualization of Genesis in the Persian period, for the simple facts that *1 Enoch* would *only* historically and literarily follow Genesis, and would *only* be an interpretation from a later author whose purposes or social location (Hellenistic, Roman, etc.) might not really inform us to the meaning or function of Genesis for an earlier author in a different time period and social location (i.e., Persian period). But we must be clear: there is ample evidence that *1 Enoch* in its final form *likely* does post-date Genesis, and excellent arguments and studies can and have been made concerning the *compositional* and *recontextual* nature of this material that changed and developed over time. However, if one argues that an earlier proto-apocalyptic fountainhead Enochic myth has been deliberately truncated and countered in Genesis, then a legitimate comparison can occur between Gen 6:1–4 and *precompositional* myths in *1 Enoch* located within the Persian period, which is the socio-historical boundary for this study.

Barker argues that the angelic descent is a competing myth for the origin of evil, it is neutered in Genesis, and the Adam and Eve story is offered as a competing myth that also

¹⁰⁰ Von Rad, *Genesis*, 70.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 114-15.

associates evil and knowledge.¹⁰² Davies argues that “J” in Genesis 1–11 contains a deliberate anti-Enochic revision of human origins in which heavenly agency... is entirely absent.”¹⁰³ In the next chapter, this option, that there was a *common myth* or a *fountainhead* of the Enochic tradition, and that it was the religious worldview of some persons at the time (proto-apocalyptic) will be more fully examined, and will be used as a point of comparison for some of the ‘religious’ rhetoric and polemic in the myths of Genesis. However, in understanding the possible fountainhead myth of the apocalyptic tradition there is another important aspect to consider other than just the formative myth.

Apocalypticism

A significant element to consider in the structure of potential anti-Enochic polemic in Genesis, and simultaneously, the promulgation of a fountainhead myth in competing literature, is apocalyptic ideology. *1 Enoch* is apocalyptic literature; therefore, if one was writing/offering competing claims to this literature, aspects of possible anti-apocalypticism should be observable. However, there is an important distinction between ‘apocalyptic literature’ and ‘apocalypticism’. Currently, scholars distinguish between “apocalypse as a literary genre, apocalypticism as a social ideology, and apocalyptic eschatology as a set of ideas and motifs that also can be found in other literary genres and social settings” in trying to understand this belief set for certain groups within Second Temple Judaism.¹⁰⁴ With these distinctions, a text may be identified as

¹⁰² Barker, “Reflections upon the Enoch Myth,” 9, 23.

¹⁰³ Davies, “And Enoch Was No More,” 103.

¹⁰⁴ Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 2-14.

“apocalyptic” if it shares the conceptual framework of the genre. Therefore, even if there is *generic* difference in texts there can still be strong *conceptual* agreement, i.e., apocalypticism.¹⁰⁵

The most significant question apocalypticism attempted to answer, and which ultimately shaped the unique way it answered, was the problem of evil in the world. The primary competing ideology at the time argued that divine blessing and salvation would only be granted to those who kept the Law.¹⁰⁶ It was assumed in that ideology that if one saw good fortune the covenant was being kept, and if one saw misfortune some prior fault had occurred. Moving forward we shall identify this deterministic understanding as ‘covenantalism’ (which will be more fully discussed in the next chapter). Major characteristics of apocalypticism were:

1. The role that supernatural agents play in human affairs
2. The expectation of an eschatological judgment
3. The expectation of reward or punishment beyond death
4. The perception that something was wrong with the world¹⁰⁷

As opposed to the immediate retribution formula of covenantalism, apocalypticism suggested that the problem of evil originated not from human inability to do right in this world, but that evil came from outside of the human realm: divine beings were the cause of evil—and the solution.¹⁰⁸

Understanding that different social groups had differing opinions pertaining to the causes of their experiences is important. The community of Yehud was not unified, but experienced substantial social conflict, and this included diverse opinions about the construction and function

¹⁰⁵ It should be noted that apocalypticism was not the only means by which to interpret phenomena in this time period, but it was a pervasive way of understanding the world for many Second Temple Jews. I would also suggest that the “apocalypticism” which will be identified in the next chapter is not the fully realized apocalypticism of later Second Temple persons, which is why the term “proto-apocalyptic” will be used in this study.

¹⁰⁶ Paolo Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 80; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 11-12.

¹⁰⁷ Jon L. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 171. Koch also suggests eight “motifs” of apocalypticism: 1) urgent expectation of the end of earthly conditions in the immediate future. 2) the end as a cosmic catastrophe. 3) periodization and determinism. 4) activity of angels and demons. 5) new salvation, paradisaic in character. 6) manifestation of the kingdom of God. 7) a mediator with royal functions. 8) the catchword “glory.” Klaus Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1972), 28-33; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 12.

¹⁰⁸ Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic*, 79-85.

of the Second Temple as well as cultic practices. Therefore, using our proposed method, if the myths in Genesis symbolically represent the social situation in Yehud and appeal to paradigmatic patriarchs as the legitimization for their social and religious innovations then we should find some evidence for this in the recontextualization of Genesis. In short, by commemorating the ‘past’, the stories in Genesis symbolically use myths to understand and legitimize the present. This legitimization involves not only the endogamous practices we will compare from Ezra and Nehemiah to patriarchal practice in Genesis, but may also reflect some of the disagreements in Yehudian society concerning religious beliefs and practices which may be reflected in the *precompositional* myths of *1 Enoch*.

Summary

At this point, then, we end our discussion of the socio-historical and literary backgrounds of reading Genesis in Persian Yehud. In the last chapter we outlined our method: a *recontextual* reading of Genesis which operates under the assumption that a valuable lens for understanding the function of the narratives in Genesis can be found through the political, social, and religious conflicts of Persian era Yehud. In this chapter we added another element to that method: identifying the ‘message’ of contemporaneous literature in the HB, Ezra and Nehemiah (with which Genesis ‘agrees’); and identifying the fountainhead and ideology of a tradition outside of the HB, *1 Enoch* (with which Genesis ‘disagrees’). We will use this method in the next chapters as we analyze Genesis, operating under the hypothesis that it will assist us in understanding the needs and concerns of the Jerusalem elite in their recontextualizations of the myths found in Genesis.

Moving forward, as we deconstruct Genesis 1–35 in the next chapters we will work chronologically through the book. As can be seen from the list above of repeated structures, archetypes, and subject matter in Genesis (p. 41), the themes and concerns of the author(s) are woven throughout the narrative; therefore, while on the one hand, it might be more productive to consider each theme or sub-theme individually and read back and forth through Genesis focusing on different themes or messages, for this study, we will follow the narrative as it is presented, and move back and forth through these themes as we encounter them. On the one hand, the themes will be analyzed under two broad headings: religious and social; but on the other, in considering the function of the Genesis narrative it is recognized that during the proposed time period these modern terms could not be so neatly divided, and that often social, political, and religious concerns were one and the same. However, as limited and anachronistic as the terms may be, they will be of some use to consider the themes suggested above through contemporary language that makes some modern correlation and sense. We now turn from the methods and hypotheses of the last two chapters, and will begin to apply it to the textual data of Genesis, in order to see if there is enough evidence to suggest a theory as to the function of the recontextualization of Genesis within the religious and social conflicts of Persian Yehud.

Chapter 3: The Religious Conflicts of Persian Yehud in the Myths of Genesis

It has been the purpose of the preceding chapters to propose a method for interpreting Genesis in the social, political, and religious conflicts of Persian Yehud. This method is indebted to a new approach of reading the HB that considers the *function* of texts in the proposed socio-historical context, as opposed to representing some kind of historical *facticity*, and assumes that texts from this era communicate more clearly the needs and concerns of the Yehud elite rather than some form of ancient ‘history’. An important assumption concerning this setting is that “The community of Yehud was not unified but experienced substantial social conflict. This included diverse opinions about the construction and function of the Second Temple as well as cultic practices.”¹⁰⁹ In this chapter we will attempt to identify aspects of the religious conflicts of Persian Yehud in the myths of Genesis 1–11. Specifically, the particular goal of analyzing this section of Genesis is to determine if competing proto-apocalyptic religious claims may have been countered and truncated within the myths of Genesis 1–11 (e.g., Enoch in Gen 5, Sons of God in Gen 6).

In this chapter, we will continue with analyzing the *recontextual* stage for Genesis outlined in chapter one, focusing on a socio-historical setting in which the final form was written, and suggesting how the resulting text could be read as a new (or at least different) text in the social situation of its production. However, in considering the possibility that aspects of Genesis might be in conflict with competing religious beliefs a second process will be engaged: employing a *precompositional* method on the apocalyptic material in *1 Enoch*. This at first may seem tenuous, or in a manner, begging the question. However, we take it that if the final recontextualization of Genesis is polemic against competing religious ideas, and those ideas are

¹⁰⁹ Berquist, “Approaching Yehud,” 3-4.

represented in some fashion in apocalyptic literature then it is plausible that it is the ideological background for the dispute. Important to keep in mind with this method: at no time is the suggestion that later redacted or developed apocalyptic material *preceded* the final form of Genesis; however, an earlier form of proto-apocalyptic religion (*precompositional*) may be countered in Genesis by a more developed and later form of Temple religion (*recontextual*).

Using this method, it is the purpose of this chapter to analyze the myths of Genesis 1–11, and suggest how these myths functioned in the possible religious conflicts of the proposed socio-historical context. By undertaking this task we will discuss some of the ideological components of covenantalism, which, as we will see below, is a drastically different ideology than apocalypticism; identify aspects and locations of truncated Enochic myths; and classify pro-covenantalism and anti-Enochic polemic in Genesis 1–11

Pro-Covenantalism and Anti-Enochic Polemic in Genesis 1–6

In this section we will analyze some features of the primordial narrative in Genesis. In undertaking this task there are two important foci: one, pro-covenantalism rhetoric in Genesis, as seen through the ideology of covenantalism (the knowledge of good and evil, and immediate retribution); and two, anti-apocalyptic/Enochic polemic in Genesis 1–11 (abbreviated and countered Enochic myths, which will be explained below).¹¹⁰ As we analyze Genesis 1–11 we will move back and forth through these concepts. Therefore, as we will see, the myths advocate a certain ideological understanding (covenantalism), and invalidate competing claims by ‘properly’ telling the story within a different conceptual framework. In the preceding chapter we

¹¹⁰ In using the terms “pro-covenantal” and “anti-Enochic” and “anti-apocalyptic” we are employing the prefixes “pro” indicating support for a party, system, idea; as opposed to “anti” indicating opposition to a particular party, system, idea, etc., which reflects the polemic and rhetoric of the social, religious, and political *conflicts* in the constructive memory of these myths. While there is later material that seems to bring the competing ideologies more into harmony much later in the Second Temple, e.g. *Jubilees*, this study is examining an earlier era where these ideologies may have been more in conflict.

highlighted an important *precompositional* fountainhead myth of the Enochic tradition which we will again encounter below. However, in addition to the central story of angelic descent for the early apocalyptic tradition(s) there is another Enochic myth that is also useful in understanding possible anti-apocalyptic polemic in Genesis 1 and 11.

The Astronomical Book and the Book of the Luminaries

An important booklet/strand in the Enochic materials is the *Book of the Luminaries*, *1 Enoch* 72–82 (BL), which gives a description of the sun and moon according to a solar calendar. Features of this astrological tradition will bookend our study on anti-Enochic polemic, which we will begin in Genesis 1, and after discussing the subsequent books in Genesis 2–10, will again be referenced in analyzing the Babel myth in Genesis 11. In discussing the BL we again encounter one of the significant difficulties in analyzing much of the material from this time period: the BL shows obvious signs of development and redaction. An important issue in considering the BL for this study, then, is that the discoveries of the Enochic booklets at Qumran indicate the Ethiopic booklet which was translated into the BL is actually a truncated version of earlier, more expansive Aramaic versions which VanderKam names the *Astronomical Book* (AB).¹¹¹

Therefore the question that arises from this process of development as far as it concerns our proposed method: could the traditions in the AB be part of the *precompositional* proto-apocalyptic beliefs that the writer(s) of Genesis felt they had to counter with the ‘proper’ ideology of their myths? The first significant aspect in considering this question is that literarily the BL “is one of the oldest sections of the collection, dating back at least well into the third century B.C.E.,” and *1 Enoch* 1–36, which contains the fountainhead myth of the tradition, does

¹¹¹ George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 37–73* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 335.

contain the ‘scientific’ understandings of the BL.¹¹² Milik writes, “This work, in which the essentially astronomical and calendrical content was enriched by cosmographic information and moral considerations, seems to me to be the oldest Jewish document attributed to Enoch.”¹¹³ However, while “one often reads that the Astronomical Book was written in the third century or before,”¹¹⁴ because of the fragmentary nature of the AB, and differences in dating, the third century BCE would be the earliest one could date the physical *compositional* evidence.

However, while the physical evidence may be later than the time period we are discussing the textual evidence indicates that the AB is indebted to other astronomical works *earlier* than the Persian period. Many scholars have compared the Enochic astrology to Mesopotamian parallels.¹¹⁵ Black suggests possible Egyptian or Babylonian influences with the *ad hoc* calendar showing “no visible trace of the sophisticated Babylonian astronomy of the Persian or Seleucid period.”¹¹⁶ However, VanderKam argues,

With the availability of more cuneiform texts, it became apparent that the Enochic astronomy was not so much a collection of tidbits from the Hebrew Bible with an admixture of Greek or Babylonian ideas here and there; rather, its roots sank deep into a form of Babylonian astronomy.¹¹⁷

Important cuneiform texts for VanderKam are MUL.APIN, probably edited between 1000 and 687 BCE, and an older text upon which the compilers of MUL.APIN relied, Enuma Anu Enlil. VanderKam concludes that “much of the Enochic astronomy is almost certainly the primitive or

¹¹² Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 44.

¹¹³ J. T. Milik, *Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments from Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 8.

¹¹⁴ Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 340.

¹¹⁵ For a survey of such studies see, James C. VanderKam, “Sources for the Astronomy in 1 Enoch 72-82,” in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Post-Biblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (C. Cohen et al., eds.; 2 vols.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 965-78.

¹¹⁶ Black, *The Book of Enoch*, 387.

¹¹⁷ Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 374.

traditional system attested” in these works.¹¹⁸ It appears that the AB and Enochic astronomy reflect a reliance on older astrological understandings; which means that the traditions in the AB could go back further than the final recontextualization of Genesis (Persian period), and definitely the final form(s) of *1 Enoch*, and be part of the religious and ideological context of some persons in Persian Yehud.

Another important piece of evidence: astral worship is denounced throughout the HB. In chapter one, we argued that “the social context of a great deal of the biblical literature in its present form (in particular, Pentateuch, Former Prophets, Latter Prophets) is to be sought in the Persian period.”¹¹⁹ If Persian Yehud this is the socio-historical context for this literature, then by inference, as astral worship is condemned in a number of places in the Pentateuch and prophetic literature, it would seem likely an “issue” for the putative community we have been discussing. In the Pentateuch we find, “And when you look up to the heavens and see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, do not be led astray and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples everywhere under heaven” (Deut 4:19 NRSV).¹²⁰ Furthermore, if one is guilty of this practice,

By going to serve other gods and worshiping them—whether the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden— and if it is reported to you or you hear of it, and you make a thorough inquiry, and the charge is proved true that such an abhorrent thing has occurred in Israel, then you shall bring out to your gates that man or that woman who has committed this crime and you shall stone the man or woman to death (Deut 17:3–5)

¹¹⁸ Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 383. For a complete discussion of the relationship of the Enochic astronomy and these cuneiform texts see, Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 373-83.

¹¹⁹ Davies, *Origins*, 4, n 7. A few recent examples, Heard, *Dynamics of Disselection*; E. T. Mullen Jr., *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations: A New Approach to the Formation of the Pentateuch* Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1997); James M. Trotter, *Reading Hosea in Achaemenid Yehud*; J. W. Watts, *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Torah* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

¹²⁰ Unless otherwise indicated all Scripture references are from *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989).

In addition to this legislature, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Deuteronomistic historian all document the presence of astral religion in Yehud.¹²¹

The antiquity of the Enochic literary material; the even greater literary antiquity of the traditions that influenced the Enochic material; and the documentation within the HB that astral worship was practiced seem to indicate that the ideological traditions from the AB are reflective of earlier proto-apocalyptic beliefs, or at the very least astronomical beliefs and practices of some group in Yehud during the Persian period with which the authors of Genesis and the HB disagreed.

Topically, the AB/BL focus on a small group of matters, “the solar year and lunar months, winds, the hierarchy of the stars, always hemmed in by a rigid schematism unrelated to reality.”¹²² In apocalyptic fashion, the material in these texts is presented as a revelation in which a divine being, the archangel Uriel, guides Enoch through the heavens and explains the movements and processes by which the heavenly bodies operate.¹²³ This study is not the place to enter into a discussion concerning all of the calendrical and cosmological issues relating to the AB/BL and its source material, as Michael Wise notes the information in these texts are “highly technical, and, frankly, for most people exceedingly boring. Furthermore, the material is poorly suited to verbal description; what is needed is a table or illustration.”¹²⁴ However, the important aspect for the following discussion is that “the combination of calendrical and geographical contents in the book may be a reflection of astrological traditions in which heavenly signs or

¹²¹ Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 389-90.

¹²² Matthew Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch: A New English Edition* (SVTP 7; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 387.

¹²³ Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 44.

¹²⁴ Michael Wise, “Astronomical Enoch” in Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 295-303, here 296.

omens were thought to predict happenings in certain parts of the earth.”¹²⁵ It seems that for some Jewish groups these astrological traditions were an important apparatus by which to interpret observable phenomena, and more importantly, justify highly speculative metaphysical assumptions. It is these astrological traditions, in accordance with the fountainhead myth of the tradition, which will be brought into discussion with Genesis 1–11 in this chapter.

Genesis 1

Genesis 1 also mentions the luminaries, but instead of the archangel Uriel explaining their operation, Genesis describes the divine creation of the heavenly bodies:

And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day (Gen 1:14–19).

The important distinction to be mindful of here is that the creation of the luminaries is not a direct rebuttal of the AB/BL *per se*, in a manner of intertextual one-to-one correlation. However, as argued above, it appears there may have been astrological traditions extant during the Persian period “in which heavenly signs or omens were thought to predict happenings in certain parts of the earth.”¹²⁶ In Genesis 1, the creation of the luminaries is described in greater extent than anything except the creation of man.¹²⁷ Hamilton notes, “Few commentators deny that this whole chapter has a strong anti-mythical thrust. Perhaps in no other section—except the sixth day—

¹²⁵ George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 8.

¹²⁶ Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 8.

¹²⁷ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 21.

does this polemic appear so bluntly as it does here.” The question then: why is this polemic so blunt and to such great extent?

Wenham argues concerning Gen 1:14-19, “The most obvious reason for the detail in the fourth day’s description is the importance of the astral bodies in ancient Near Eastern thought. In neighboring cultures, the sun and the moon were some of the most important gods in the pantheon, and the stars were often credited with controlling human destiny.”¹²⁸ The significance of the heavenly bodies can be seen in the cuneiform astrological texts mentioned above, and from the priority of the sun and moon as gods in other cultures.¹²⁹ Whereas these parallels are important, and the astrological traditions in *1 Enoch* appear to be indebted to earlier material, within the study being done here, we wish to seek to engage this material to see if the polemic of Genesis might be located within the conflicts of Persian Yehud, and the way these proto-apocalyptic astrological traditions may have been deemed ‘unacceptable’ by the author(s) of Genesis.

While prior ANE material may portray the astral bodies as gods, and useful for interpreting phenomena or divination; the author(s) of Genesis conceive of the heavenly bodies in an entirely different manner. Commenting on the ‘problem’ of light being created on day one without the sun, moon, and stars being created until day four, Milgrom notes,

That is, the light previously created was turned over to the sun and moon to regulate the alternation of day and night. Finally the stars, which were regarded as controllers of human destiny, are mentioned only as an afterthought... Yet these stages in the demotion of the celestial luminaries to an anonymous status and a minor position in the order of creation (the fourth day) is only a small step in their debasement. The ultimate, and singular, purpose of the text is to demonstrate that the sun, moon, and stars are powerless... this constitutes the most telling

¹²⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 21.

¹²⁹ Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis 1 in Relation to the Ancient Near Eastern Parallels,” *AUSS 10* (1972): 1–20.

diminution of the sun, moon, and stars. They are powerless! They are only tools created by God to funnel the already existing light upon the earth.¹³⁰

In astrological and religious parallels from many of Yehud's neighbors the sun and moon are gods, but in Genesis 1 they merely regulate the light of day and night. In the Enochic/apocalyptic tradition the stars are identified with the Watchers (e.g., *1 Enoch* 18:12–16; 21:1–6; 86:1–3; 104:2), and throughout the ANE stars were worshipped and often considered to be in charge of human fate; but here in Genesis 1 they are merely reflections of light and not 'supernatural' beings in any sense. Therefore, if in *precompositional* proto-apocalyptic belief and practice, the sun, moon, and stars are useful for interpreting the reality of a chaotic world, then in Genesis 1, where *order* and not chaos is the characteristic of God's work, the luminaries merely mark the passage of time, separate between the night and day, and illuminate the earth.

We will return to the AB below, in discussing the Babel myth, which may stand as a bookend to the Genesis 1 creation myth, and which may further carry some anti-Enochic polemic against the speculative "astrological traditions in which heavenly signs or omens were thought to predict happenings in certain parts of the earth."¹³¹ However, if the AB/BL represent a possible proto-apocalyptic astrological tradition, then a competing ideological concept might be represented in the myths of Genesis other than just the debasement of the luminaries' powers. In other words, if the sun, moon, and stars do not explain phenomena, observable and unobservable, then by what criteria does one judge events and behaviour? It is to that competing ideology, covenantalism, we will turn in the next chapters of Genesis before returning to more possible anti-Enochic/astrological polemic in Genesis 11.

¹³⁰ Jacob Milgrom, "The Alleged 'Hidden Light,'" in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel* (H. Najman and J. H. Newman eds.; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 41–44, here 42.

¹³¹ Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation*, 8.

Genesis 2–5: Covenantalism: The Knowledge of Good and Evil

An important aspect for covenantalism polemic in Genesis is the knowledge of good and evil. Within the ideology of covenantalism there is a deterministic framework that functions to determine appropriate choices for behaviour, but is also employed for understanding the consequences of right and wrong choices: if you do good, good things happen; if you do bad, bad things happen. The reward for good choices, and the punishment for bad choices, both come from the same source: A God who is in *control* of everything.

Following Genesis 1 and God's creation of an orderly world the knowledge of good and evil is a consistent theme in the next several chapters (along with the resultant consequences of that knowledge). This theme begins with the second creation myth in Genesis. The well-known story relays how humankind received the ability to distinguish between good and evil: Yahweh Elohim plants a garden in the east, Eden, and in the middle plants the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Yahweh Elohim commands the man that he has created that he can eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, after taking the advice of a talking serpent, the man and his wife do eat from the forbidden tree, thus gaining the knowledge of good and evil. Within the framework of covenantalism this is an extremely important narrative, because if one is going to advocate a theory of covenantalism and immediate retribution then it is important, even *absolutely necessary*, for the knowledge of good and evil to go forth from the Garden of Eden.¹³² Functionally, this meant in the ideology of these persons that when bad events occurred it was their own 'fault': they possessed the knowledge of good and evil from the first man and his wife, therefore, if something 'bad' was occurring, at

¹³² I am indebted to Mullen Jr., for identifying this theme and its role in the following narratives, and how it establishes the basic categories of life and human nature for the author(s) of Genesis, in E. Theodore Mullen, *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations: A New Approach to the Formation of the Pentateuch* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 98-118.

some point that person must have made an incorrect decision from which they were suffering: if you do bad, bad things happen.

However, as opposed to the deterministic understanding of covenantalism—that people have the choice between good and evil—Paolo Sacchi argues that the *oldest* underlying problem in the *oldest* apocalypse is a different origin of bad events: the apocalyptic belief that supernatural evil had corrupted creation.¹³³ Margaret Barker argues that the angelic descent myth of Gen 6:1–4 (which we will analyze below) is a competing myth for the origin of evil, which is sterilized in Genesis, and the Adam and Eve myth is offered as a competing story that also associates evil and knowledge but which originates in human disobedience.¹³⁴ Davies adds, “In advocating a myth that sin originates in human disobedience, Genesis 2–4 opposes the [Enochic] myth of a heavenly origin.”¹³⁵ At this juncture, it may be beneficial to avoid words like ‘sin’ in understanding this myth; however, the important aspect of the polemic in this story is that the cornerstone of covenantalism is established in the myth of Adam and Eve’s acquisition of the knowledge of good and evil. This covenantalism ideology means that human beings possess the power to make correct choices and are responsible for the repercussions of those choices, as opposed to the chaotic and supernaturally evil world of the apocalyptic myths with consequences to human experiences that are beyond the influence of human actions. Furthermore, Genesis 2–3 is merely the beginning of pro-covenantalism rhetoric concerning the knowledge of good and evil in the book.

Following their expulsion from the garden, Adam and Eve become the parents to two sons, Cain and Abel. In this myth the knowledge of good and evil going forth from the garden is

¹³³ Paolo Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*.

¹³⁴ Margaret Barker, “Some Reflections upon the Enoch Myth,” *JSOT* 15 (1980): 7-29, here 9, 23.

¹³⁵ Davies, “And Enoch Was Not, For Genesis Took Him,” in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb* (C. Hempel and J. Lieu eds.; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 97-107, here 102.

further elucidated by God himself, “The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it” (Gen 4:7). Immediately following this declaration by YHWH, and without any explanation or transition, Cain asks his brother out to the field and kills him. Cain has the choice to do good or to sin, and obviously he fails, but the decision is his without any outside supernatural agency. In addition to Cain’s choice between good and evil, and his obvious failure, Davies asserts that the characteristics of the Enochic arch-angel/villain Azazel have been transferred to Cain in the Genesis narrative.

In the *Book of the Watchers* the angels also bring knowledge of arts and sciences to humans. In that story also the birth of giants leads to bloodshed, and the earth cries out and its voice is heard in heaven. The perpetrator does not die but remains imprisoned in the Wilderness. All of these features, omitted in Genesis 6:1–4, reappear in connection with the figure of Cain.

In Genesis 4 it is the descendants of Cain who invent the arts and sciences; it is after Abel’s murder that the earth cries out because of the blood and is heard in heaven.¹³⁶ Indeed, in his words “my sin is too great for me to bear” (Gen 4:13) may lie an allusion to the fate of the scapegoat (the “Azazel” goat) itself, condemned *not to die* but to wander in the desert under the weight of Israel’s iniquities. It is an improbable coincidence that these three features of the Enoch story are all applied to Cain.¹³⁷

In this instance then we would have a primary character in a particular myth that paradigmatically demonstrates in a negative fashion pro-covenantalism understandings of human disobedience, but at the same time, may also be part of an ongoing process in the primordial narrative of truncating or subsuming apocalyptic myths, a process which we will encounter below when considering Gen 6:1–4 and the Babel myth. As to the first process for this character,

¹³⁶ Davies comments here, “The “mark of Cain” may have a connection with the Mishnaic tradition that a ‘mark’ was placed upon the goat in the wilderness, specifically a ‘thread of crimson wool’: see *m. Yoma* 6:6.

¹³⁷ Davies, “And Enoch Was Not,” 103. This is also the second-layer of the Enoch tradition that Nickelsburg notes in his source analysis of *1 Enoch* 1–36.

pro-covenantalism rhetoric, Cain has the ability to master good and evil, but chooses evil, which is a theme further carried into the subsequent genealogies of Genesis 4 and 5.

Following the Cain and Abel myth are two genealogies, and by comparing the seventh person in each genealogy—and considering the didactic and polemical nature of genealogies in antiquity this number and parallel seem purposeful¹³⁸—it may be that the continuing theme of the knowledge of good and evil can be observed. In the first genealogy, identified in source theory as the ‘J’ genealogy, the seventh person from Adam is Lamech, and as Cain chooses evil so too Lamech, “I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-seven fold.” Following this Cainite genealogy is the Sethite genealogy (the ‘P’ genealogy) whose seventh person is Enoch who, compared to his counterpart in the Cainite genealogy, “walks with God.” Functionally then, within the matrix of the knowledge of good and evil, when these two genealogies are contrasted you have the seventh in one genealogy choosing evil, and the seventh in the other choosing good.¹³⁹

Therefore, thus far in our reading of Genesis 1–5: the luminaries are powerless, they are merely reflections of light; the cornerstone of covenantalism has gone forth from the Garden, and it is expounded by Yahweh himself, and paradigmatically demonstrated negatively in the actions of Cain and Lamech. Taken all together it is pro-covenantalism polemic. However, not only is there polemic for a certain position, there may also be polemic against another position: the offspring of the angels are not the perpetrators of bloodshed leading the earth to cry out. It is a

¹³⁸ In a paper of this length it is impossible to go into all the particulars of Jewish numerology, therefore, it must suffice to say: seven is a very significant number. The number is an important symbolic number in Jewish tradition. Seven symbolizes perfection and completeness. For example, the first-century philosopher Philo writes, “And I know not if anyone would be able to celebrate the nature of the number seven in adequate terms, since it is superior to every form of expression” in Charles Duke Yonge, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 13.

¹³⁹ Mullen, Jr., *Ethnic Myths*, 111–12. I would propose that this is a good example of how diachronic methodologies account for the textual data in one manner, identifying possible ‘sources’, but on the other hand, how the synchronic methodology being employed here also accounts for the same data in another manner, the pro-covenantal polemic in the religious conflicts of Persian Yehud.

human, and it is the offspring of this human who chose evil, and who are the ones who invent the arts and sciences.

At this point we will cease our discussion of covenantalism in Genesis 2–5, though we will return to this ideological/religious worldview below when discussing another important concept for covenantalism: immediate retribution. However, before reengaging this topic it will be beneficial to analyze Genesis 5–6, and by considering some *precompositional* and *compositional* methods, attempt to identify further possible truncating and recontextualizing of proto-apocalyptic myths. The purpose of doing so is ultimately to understand, using our synchronic/recontextual method, how the ‘proper’ understanding of these myths fit the framework of covenantalism in the final recontextualization of Genesis, and attempted to sterilize some of the claims of proto-apocalypticism. Therefore, in the next section we will examine the myth of Enoch and the fountainhead myth of the Enochic tradition in Genesis, and by comparing the myths as they appear in Genesis with *1 Enoch* endeavour to suggest how proto-apocalyptic traditions may have been truncated or obfuscated within the covenantalism myths of Genesis.

Genesis 5–6: Enoch and the Sons of God

In the last chapter we encountered a hypothesis concerning the later development of the Enochic corpus with Nickelsburg’s recontextualizing the Genesis myths for a new socio-historical setting in the Hellenistic period. In his argument, the Genesis material is expanded, and the synchronic meaning of the final form of *1 Enoch* is understood through the social upheaval and political conflict during the wars of the Diadochi. However, what has been suggested here is that perhaps a *precompositional* fountainhead myth of the Enochic tradition was a contemporary

competing ideology at the time the final form of Genesis was recontextualized in Yehud.

Therefore, in this section we will depart slightly from the proposed method and engage some *compositional* methods pertaining to Genesis 5–6; however, the goal of this analysis is to ultimately bring the versions of possibly truncated proto-apocalyptic myths in Genesis into discussion with *1 Enoch*, and compare how differently the two ideologies represented in those books conceptualize the mythic past, and finally, suggest how these different conceptualizations may have functioned in the proposed socio-historical setting. In doing so, we will analyze briefly the Enoch narrative in Genesis 5 and the Sons of God myth in Genesis 6.

Considering the amount of literature pertaining to Enoch in the HB it is curious how such a significant corpus of literature could grow relating to this figure. The person of Enoch is only referenced twice in the entire HB: first in the genealogical list in Genesis 5 and then in another genealogy in 1 Chronicles. The linear genealogy in Genesis 5 traces the primeval line from Adam to Noah. Verses 21–24 record Enoch, son of Jared,

When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him (Gen 5:21–24).

Genesis twice notes וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ עִנּוֹךְ אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים “Enoch walked with God” at the beginnings of verses twenty-two and twenty-four. Sarna, proposes that when the author of Genesis wrote כִּי־לָקַח אֹתוֹ “For God took him,” at the end of verse twenty-four this should signal to the reader that “God took him” was meant as a euphemism for death, and only the later tale of Elijah’s ascendance into heaven led people to understand this passage in a similar fashion. Therefore, for Sarna, “walked with God” is mentioned twice to show the piety of Enoch’s life and to ensure the

reader he did not die prematurely as a punishment for sin.¹⁴⁰ While this interpretation would fit nicely into the proposed reading here as anti-Enochic polemic—Enoch is not functioning in his apocalypticism ideological role in heaven, but dead—we will pursue another understanding of this particular pericope and locate it in its wider context.

In the last chapter we highlighted J. T. Milik's argument that "An indirect allusion is already to be found in Gen. 5:23, where the writer, having fixed the age of the patriarch at 365 years, implies, in guarded terms, the existence of astronomical works circulating under the name of Enoch."¹⁴¹ To this von Rad added that the Genesis Enoch pericope gave, "The impression of being only a brief reference to a much more extensive tradition; it is an open question, therefore, whether much of the apocalyptic Enoch tradition is not really very old and precedes in time (not follows) the priestly narrative."¹⁴² Functionally, while the Cain myth analyzed above completely absorbs and changes a dominant myth of proto-apocalypticism, thereby imbuing it with the 'right' ideology, the Enoch myth is merely truncated, and placed within the other myths of Genesis. However, even if certain aspects are not changed as drastically as Cain, by making Enoch part of the 'proper' story, his function as a paradigmatic patriarch becomes part of the story of covenantalism.

Naturally, another section to associate with the person of Enoch from the HB is Genesis 6, as the Watchers material from *1 Enoch* closely resembles Gen 6:1–4 in *some* aspects. Gen 6:1–4 is a short account that has puzzled scholars and laymen alike, and has lead to a wide range of interpretations. The father of the DH, Julius Wellhausen, famously described the passage as a

¹⁴⁰ Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (JPS; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 43.

¹⁴¹ Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 8.

¹⁴² Von Rad, *Genesis*, 70.

“cracked erratic boulder.”¹⁴³ Commentators after him have generally followed his perplexed lead. Speiser declared the undisguised mythology of the isolated fragment “puzzling and controversial in the extreme. Its problems are legion.”¹⁴⁴ Hermann Gunkel suggested bluntly, “This piece is a torso. It can hardly be called a story.”¹⁴⁵ Ultimately, because of its strangeness others have suggested that “the narrative must not be pressed too far because we do not understand it,”¹⁴⁶ and “so full of difficulties as to defy certainty of interpretation.”¹⁴⁷

The pericope along with vv 5–8 functions in the final form of Genesis as a literary bridge from the *toledot* in ch 5 to the Flood narrative(s) in chs 6–9, possibly describing the reason(s) for the flood:

When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. Then the Lord said, "My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown (Gen 6:1–4)

In the next chapter we will consider the function of this passage within the final recontextualization of Gen 6–35 using our proposed method; in this section we will try to understand how the story may have been truncated within Genesis, and its relationship to the possible ideological/religious conflicts of Persian Yehud.

Major interpretive difficulties abound for the modern scholar using source/compositional methods on Gen 6:1–4: Is the pericope a coherent unit? Does it belong to the Jahwist (J), Elohist (E), P, or with another source all together? Who are the בני־האלהים in vv. 2 and 4, and the נפלים in

¹⁴³ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1878 reprint; New York: Meridian, 1957), 317.

¹⁴⁴ E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB 1; Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 45.

¹⁴⁵ Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (trans. M-E. Biddle; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 59.

¹⁴⁶ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Louisville: John Knox, 1982), 72.

¹⁴⁷ Sarna, *Genesis*, 45.

v. 4? In attempting to answer these difficult questions some scholars have searched for parallels to this account in other ANE mythologies; others have simply taken it literally (as much as possible) and have tried to interpret it accordingly; and some have attempted to demythologize it and understand it in its literary context. However, if we assume that a fuller *precompositional* myth relating to Enoch has been truncated in Genesis, and that the stories of Enoch and the sons of God have in some manner been ‘separated’ in their recontextualizations in the final form of Genesis, then the obvious questions are: where, how, and why? There are some possible steps to take in pursuing such questions. One possible method in identifying a truncated Sons of God myth is considering Gen 6:1–2, 4 as a possible distinct unit from Gen 6:3.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ There are two exemplars for this methodological approach: one ancient and one modern. The ancient model for trying to recover an edited Enochic myth in Genesis is another very old book: *Jubilees*. In treating the pericope under consideration the author of *Jubilees* separates 6:1–2, 4 from 6:3.

When mankind began to multiply on the surface of the entire earth and daughters were born to them, the angels of the Lord — in a certain (year) of this jubilee — saw that they were beautiful to look at. So they married of them whomever they chose. They gave birth to children for them and they were giants (*Jub.* 5:1)

While there are certainly some interpretive elements here (e.g., “angels of the Lord” instead of “sons of God,” “giants” instead of *nephilim*) that reflect later developments in Second Temple Judaism, as a whole the *Jubilees* passage is consistent with what will be argued further below, and considers Gen 6:3 separate from the above. It should be noted at this juncture that the use of Gen 6:3 in *Jubilees* is not totally divorced from its context in Genesis; it is put in the framework of God’s judgment on the giants and their resultant civil war; however, the author of *Jubilees* observes this as subsequent to the rise of wickedness on the earth and God’s judgment to obliterate all flesh from the earth. Therefore, in the interpretation of the author of *Jubilees* the events of Gen 6:1–2, 4 occur, there is a development of wickedness and sin on the earth, and only after the multiplication of evil on the earth, and God’s decision to obliterate people, is it appropriate to speak of limiting the life span of all flesh of Gen 6:3. Westermann considered Gen 6:1–2, 4 a distinct unit; a Canaanite myth with 6:3 being a J gloss.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, his reconstructed Canaanite myth would read:

^{6:1} It happened when people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. ⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown.

The coherence of this unit is further suggested by recognizing that the taking of wives in verse two and the resultant offspring in verse four are not broken apart: there is the cause and the effect without the divine aside and judgment. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11* (London: SPCK, 1984), 381-82.

Ultimately, we are pursuing a *recontextual* understanding of these myths as they would possibly function in the context of the whole of a book like Genesis within Persian Yehud. However, it may be beneficial to take an excursus, and utilize a *compositional* method concerning Gen 6:1–4, and consider if it might in some manner ‘reflect’ the origin of the proto-apocalyptic tradition we examined in the last chapter (before being edited, properly told, or truncated within Genesis). As mentioned in chapter one, I believe that diachronic/*compositional* methodologies do account for a great deal of textual data, and the reading of the final recontextualization of Genesis in this study is indebted to the traditional methods and conclusions of historical-critical approaches to pentateuchal studies. Therefore, in this instance, briefly utilizing a *compositional* method will help us more profitably suggest a reason for the *recontextualization* of the stories in the religious conflicts of Persian Yehud.

An Argument for Two Original Possible Placements of Gen 6:1–4 within P

Thus far in this study we have reviewed several important hypotheses and assumptions for some scholars concerning Genesis and *1 Enoch*. If we are to accept some of the source hypotheses and diachronic/*compositional* methods highlighted in chapter one then a valid question concerning the source of Gen 6:1–2, 4 would be to consider where it might have ‘originally’ been understood within the *precompositional* myth; possibly found in the *compositional* material; before being edited or truncated within Genesis for a certain audience (*recontextual*). This process—from *precompositional*, to *compositional*, to *recontextual*—will take us through all three contextual stages of interpretation from chapter one, operating more within the methods of a scholar like Gunkel, and following Eichorn’s belief that “Any interpretation of a myth which does not consider the origin and development of the myth is

false.”¹⁴⁹ This procedure is of course hypothetical; however, if enough echoes of the *precompositional* myth are identifiable in Genesis, and some amount of ‘re-ordering’ (*recontextualizing*) can be demonstrated, then the possibility that the fountainhead myth of proto-apocalypticism was edited and countered in the myths of Genesis, even if in a *precompositional* form, should be considered plausible.

Possible P Source and Fountainhead Myth Reconstruction A

If P gives its reason for the flood at 6:11 (“Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence”) then 6:1–2, 4 may not have originally been placed within the P narrative in the manner it was finally located in the final form of Genesis. In considering another place for the passage within P there is one striking option that brings together a number of elements: placing the fragment within the priestly genealogy during the time of Jared (Gen 5:18–20). A possible reconstruction (Pr^a)¹⁵⁰:

5:18 When Jared had lived one hundred sixty-two years he became the father of Enoch. 6:1 And when people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, 6:2 the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. 6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown. 5:19 Jared lived after the birth of Enoch eight hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. 5:20 Thus all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty-two years; and he died.

Obviously, a passage cannot just be placed anywhere within a *compositional* source *tohu vavohu*; there are three reasons to suggest this as a possible location.

First, even with his commitment to the J source Skinner still notes, “The introductory clause “when mankind began to multiply, etc., suggests it was closely preceded by an account of

¹⁴⁹ Gressman, *Albert Eichorn*, 8.

¹⁵⁰ For the full reconstruction see Addendum A on page 138.

the creation of man.”¹⁵¹ With its placement at the stage of Jared within the P genealogy his observation is effectually so. Second, Genesis 1 contains two blessings from God. In the first (v. 22) he blesses all the creatures of the earth, air, and water; in the second (v. 28) he blesses האדם using the imperative רבו (multiply). In 6:1 האדם is לרב (to multiply). In the P narrative God has blessed *ha’adam* and commanded him to multiply, and this is what we find reflected in the fragment under consideration. While these two elements are far apart in the final form of Genesis they are drawn quite closely together in the present Pr^a reconstruction. Third, there is already an interpolation into the priestly genealogy concerning Enoch. By inserting the material here there is still only one interpolation; it merely concerns two persons instead of one, and it reflects closely the most common understanding of this material represented elsewhere in Second Temple Judaism.

This reconstruction is very similar to the fountainhead of the Enochic tradition.

1 Enoch	Genesis Pr^a
When the sons of men had multiplied in those days, beautiful and comely daughters were born to them. And the watchers, the sons of heaven, saw them and desired them. And they said to one another, “Come let us choose for ourselves wives from the daughters of men, and let us beget children for ourselves... Then they all swore together and bound one another with a curse. And they were, all of them, two hundred, who descended in the days of Jared...and they conceived from them and bore to them great giants. And the giants begot Nephilim (1 En. 6:1-7:2) ¹⁵²	^{5:18} When Jared had lived one hundred sixty-two years he became the father of Enoch. ^{6:1} And when people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, ^{6:2} the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. ^{6:4} The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown. ^{5:19} Jared lived after the birth of Enoch eight hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. ^{5:20} Thus all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty-two years; and he died.

¹⁵¹ Skinner, *Genesis*, 141.

¹⁵² Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation*, 23-4.

The parallels of the 1 *Enoch* fountainhead myth to Pr^a are obvious: the sons of God see that the daughters of men are beautiful and descend in the days of Jared to take wives and have children. The main difference is a step between this union and the נפלים. In Genesis the נפלים seem to be the direct offspring; in the BW there is a generation between: giants.

The parallels may not end there. In the BW the children and grandchildren of the improper sexual activity devour the labour of all the sons of men (7:3), cause violence and much bloodshed on the earth (9:1), and the whole earth is filled with iniquity (9:9); ultimately, the half-breeds are sent against one another in a war of destruction (10:9). Therefore, God commands the angel Sariel to go to Noah, tell him about the deluge, and reveal to him what he should do to escape because *the deluge is going to destroy everything on the earth* (10:1–3). Can P be understood similarly?

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth (Gen 6:11–13).

For these reasons it is possible that Gen 6:1–2, 4 inserted into the Genesis P genealogy and Flood myth reflect at the *compositional* stage of interpretation similarities to the fountainhead proto-apocalyptic myth found in the BW and other Enochic booklets.¹⁵³ In both the Enochic framework and the source/*compositional* Genesis reconstruction offered above, sons of God descend in the days of Jared, they intermingle with humans, they have children, there is violence on the whole earth, and God must judge. However, there are significant differences that will be highlighted below as we consider the apocalypticism of the Enochic materials against the anti-Enochic polemic of Gen 1–11.

¹⁵³ Cf. 1 *En.* 106:13–15.

Possible P Source and Fountainhead Myth Reconstruction B

There is another possibility for the pericope under consideration which we shall identify as P reconstruction b (Pr^b).¹⁵⁴ The suggestion here is that Gen 6:1–2, 4 remain in its redacted/*recontextual* position and the priestly genealogy be removed between the creation and flood myths. This reconstruction strengthens the first two considerations from Pr^a. First, if Skinner’s observation that the introductory clause “when mankind began to multiply” suggests it was closely preceded by an account of the creation of man is correct, then Pr^b brings the two passages even closer than the first. Second, by doing so, God’s command to רבו to האדם is almost immediately being fulfilled in Pr^b. Third, while less explicit, Pr^b still reads very well within the Enochic framework: creation, multiplication of man, impure intermingling, increase of evil and violence on earth, God’s judgement, and finally the Flood. Last, the Pr^b flood introduction mirrors the economy of wording and unity of focus similar to the other P narratives in Genesis.

These reconstructions obviously rely heavily on the *precompositional* myth of the Enochic tradition for their formulation; however, there are echoes of the fountainhead myth identifiable in Genesis, and some amount of ‘reordering’ (*recontextualizing*) can be demonstrated, therefore, the possibility that the fountainhead myth of proto-apocalypticism was edited and countered in the myths of Genesis, even if in a *precompositional* form, can be considered *plausible*. However, in addition to the above reconstructions of the fountainhead myth of the Enochic tradition in the source/*compositional* material of Genesis: is there any other evidence from the wider context of Genesis 1–11 to support the possibility that the truncation of an Enochic myth in Gen 6:1–4 might be part of a wider program of pro-covenantalism and anti-apocalypticism polemic in the first 11 chapters of the book, therefore making the above reconstructions more plausible? By returning to the ideological/religious concept of

¹⁵⁴ For this reconstruction see Addendum B on page 141.

covenantalism and an important idea for that worldview—immediate retribution—and comparing some significant similarities and differences in the Sons of God/Watchers myths of Genesis and *1 Enoch* we may be able to see more clearly the reason for the *recontextualization* of this common myth in Genesis.

Pro-Covenantalism and Anti-Enochic Polemic in Genesis 6–11

Genesis 6–9: Covenantalism: Immediate Retribution

In Genesis 6, it is from the extended theme and paradigmatic presentation of the knowledge of good and evil in Gen 2–5 that the polemic of covenantalism transitions to its next theme: what happens if one chooses evil continually? The answer to that question is immediate retribution. Following the genealogies in Gen 4–5, and the brief representation of the Enochic fountainhead myth in 6:1–4, the story takes a drastic turn,

The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, “I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created —people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them” (Gen 6:5–7).

This theme of divine intervention and retribution is fairly consistent throughout the first half of Genesis in which God plays a major role. On the one hand, it is obvious to suggest that God is a primary character in the narrative of Genesis, but perhaps on the other, familiarity with the stories and their ‘focus’ on the patriarchs can conceal how prominent a character God is in these cultural myths, and his significant role of intervening and punishing bad human decisions. In Genesis 2–3 Adam and Eve disobey God’s command and he personally removes them from the Garden. Cain does not heed God’s voice, does not master evil, kills his brother, and is cursed from the ground and driven from God’s presence. In the flood myth, the human inclination

towards evil choices has become so ubiquitous God decides to wipe all flesh from the face of the earth. Following the flood, Yahweh “comes down” from heaven and puts a stop to the building in Babel, confuses language, and scatters humanity over the face of the earth. Finally for this theme, Yahweh says to Abraham, “How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know” (Gen 18:20–21).” The situation in Sodom and Gomorrah requires God’s personal intervention and punishment, “Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven” (Gen19:25). Functionally, the response to all of the ‘sinful’ events is personal divine intervention and punishment: when those who have the ability to choose between good and evil (because it has gone forth from the garden “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil”) incline their hearts to evil choices continually, Yahweh intervenes with the appropriate punishment.

As opposed to the story of covenantalism, the fountainhead myth of apocalypticism and apocalyptic understandings of evil begin with supernatural agency; however, in the proto-apocalyptic framework for interpreting phenomena there is a horrible side effect to the problem of evil that originates in supernatural agency: because the problem begins outside the human sphere the solution must also come from outside the human sphere. Thus, in the oldest version of the Enochic myth, the BW, and reflected in the framework of other Enochic stories, God sends good angels to deal with the problem of evil and to purify the earth. Raphael binds Asael and throws him in an opening in the wilderness (*1 En* 10:4), and Michael binds Shemihazah and the others with him in the valleys of the earth until the day of judgement (*1 En* 10:11). When the bad angels have been dealt with temporarily—in the common framework of the story their ultimate

judgement is on the great day of everlasting judgement—God commands Michael to renovate the earth:

Destroy all perversity from the face of the earth, and let every wicked deed be gone; and let the plant of righteousness and truth appear, and it will become a blessing, (and) the deeds of righteousness and truth will be planted forever with joy.

And now the righteous will escape, and they will live until they beget thousands, and all the days of their youth and their old age will be completed in peace. Then all the earth will be tilled in righteousness, and all of it will be planted with trees and filled with blessing; and all the trees of joy will be planted on it. They will plant vines on it, and every vine that will be planted on it will yield a thousand jugs of wine, and every seed that is sown on it, each measure will yield a thousand measures, and each measure of olives will yield ten baths of oil. Cleanse the earth from all impurity and from all wrong and from all lawlessness and from all sin, and godlessness and all impurities that have come upon the earth, remove.

And all the sons of men will become righteous, and all the people will worship (me), and will bless me and prostrate themselves. And all the earth will be cleansed from all defilement and from all uncleanness, and I shall not again send upon them any wrath or scourge for all the generations of eternity (*1 En* 10:16–22)

There are some similarities between this story and the version found in Genesis, but more importantly, some very significant differences.

The similarities are large-scale between the two stories. First—and I am assuming supernatural beings in the Genesis myth—angels descend and intermingle with the daughters of men (*1 En* 6:1–7:2; Gen 6:1–4), the earth needs to be purified (*1 En* 10:16, 20, 22a; Gen 6:7, 11–12), and God promises that he will not again send any wrath or flood the earth for all eternity (*1 En* 10:22b; Gen 9:11). However, while there may be some similarities in the framework of the stories, many of the details illustrate how differently these stories were conceptualized, and ultimately, recontextualized. First, in the BW after the commissioning of Raphael to bind Asael, and before the commissioning of Michael to imprison Shemihazah and his associates quoted

above, Gabriel is commissioned to destroy the giants, the sons of the Watchers, from among the sons of men

And to Gabriel he said, “Go, Gabriel, to the bastards, to the half-breeds, to the sons of miscegenation; and destroy the sons of the watchers from among the sons of men; send them against one another in a war of destruction. Length of days they will not have; and no petition will be granted to their fathers in their behalf, that they should expect to live and everlasting life, nor even that each of them should live five hundred years (1 Enoch 10:9–10)

Thus far, in the Enochic version of the story, bad angels rebel, good angels bind, improper children of bad angels destroy each other, and a good angel purifies the earth; however, it is important to note from the earliest version of the Enochic story that it does not specify the manner by which the earth is purified.¹⁵⁵

On the other hand, the flood story in Genesis is much more specific as to this detail. The obvious similarity in the two myths is that the sons of God come down and intermingle with the daughters of men, but from there they diverge. In Genesis, the Lord sees the wickedness of humankind is great and decides, “I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them” (Gen 6:7). God’s judgement continues

¹⁵⁵ However, later Enochic material, which still may reflect the common story behind *1 Enoch* and Genesis, or could be later polemic against Genesis’s version of the flood account, outlines a significant drawback to this series of events: the offspring of the watchers are half flesh and half spirit; so while their bodies are destroyed their spirits continue to live:

But now the giants who were begotten by the spirits and flesh— they will call them evil spirits on the earth, for their dwelling will be on the earth. The spirits that have gone forth from the body of their flesh are evil spirits, for from humans they came into being, and from the holy watchers was the origin of their creation. Evil spirits they will be on the earth, and evil spirits they will be called... And the spirits of the giants lead astray, do violence, make desolate, and attack and wrestle and hurl upon the earth and cause illnesses... These spirits will rise up against the sons of men and against the women, for they have come forth from them. (*1 En.* 15: 8-11)

In this scenario the Watchers remain in imprisonment and the evil spirits of their children live on to rise up against men and women. Functionally, then, while Genesis might insist that the Watchers and their children had been destroyed, Enochic Judaism could counter that the spirit-half of the Watcher’s children could not be destroyed.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth (Gen 6:11–13).

First, God's pronounces his judgement, and then he enacts it,

The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters. The waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered; the waters swelled above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. And all flesh died that moved on the earth" (Gen 7:18–21).

After the devastating flood, God remembers Noah and the *only remaining* living beings that are with him in the Ark,

Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth (Gen 8:16–17)

Finally, God makes a pronouncement to never again destroy all flesh,

I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done (Gen 8:21)

As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth (Gen 9:9–11)

The differences between this story and the Enochic version are not insignificant.

In the Enochic story God is in heaven and sends angels to deal with the problems created by another group of angels descending to earth and acting improperly; in Genesis God deals with the 'problem' himself. In the Enochic story it is the life-span of the Watchers' sons that is limited; in Genesis it is the life span of humans. In *1 Enoch*, the angels are placed in a position of

confinement until the Day of Judgment; in Genesis they are destroyed by the flood waters which cover the mountains along with *all* flesh. The primary difference is twofold: In the apocalyptic myths the angels are God's actors on earth, and the ultimate judgment of the bad angels has an eschatological understanding: it is still to happen. In Genesis, God himself punishes the angels and humans, and there is not an eschatological understanding: the judgement is done, the ground will not be cursed, and even though the human heart is evil (*not* evil spirits or angels) God will not destroy every living creature again.

At this juncture, then, the common framework of the Enochic myth has been obfuscated and hidden within the Genesis narrative, and some of its major points have been repudiated by an alternate myth that promotes a covenantalism understanding of reality. In the Enochic story, primordial rebellion is the cause of original evil, and this supernatural agency is the cause of present evil and human disobedience. In the Genesis story choosing evil behavior is the original evil, and the cause of present evils; and most importantly, that 'cause' of evil is located in the natural realm: the knowledge of good and evil. The proto-apocalyptic fountainhead myth has been appropriated into covenantalism and *recontextualized* to correctly tell the right ideology: covenantalism. In addition to this pro-covenantalism argument, there may be another significant religious/ideological disagreement which we briefly highlighted above in discussing Genesis 1, and to which we now return.

Genesis 11 and Astrological Traditions

If we are reading Genesis 1–11 as propaganda for covenantalism in certain places and anti-Enochic/proto-apocalyptic polemic in others then there are three items worthy of note in the Babel story concerning proto-apocalyptic astrological traditions, or as Zephaniah states it, "those

who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens” (Zeph 1:5). First, in the Tower of Babel narrative the people decide to make a city “ומגדל בשמים וראשו” (and a tower whose top is in the heavens); second, the purpose of building the *migdal* is so that the people might “נעשה-לנו שם” (make for ourselves a name); last, because of humankind’s building projects יהוה decides to ‘come down’ and see the city and tower which the בני האדם have built. There are some interesting parallels in this story compared to Gen 6:1–4.

In the Sons of God myth the בני-האלהים *descend* and take wives from the בנות האדם which leads ultimately to God’s judgement in the great flood. In the Babel story the בני האדם *ascend* in to the heavens which again leads to God’s intervention in the confusing of language. If the Enochic/proto-apocalyptic astrology were used to interpret or explain phenomena or predict happenings based on observing the heavenly bodies then a tower into the heavens to observe this incorrect or illicit knowledge would be deserving of God’s punishment according to the logic of covenantalism.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, the purpose of building a tower into the heavens is so that the בני האדם can make a *shem* for themselves: as we will see in the next chapters, as we begin to locate an ideological context for Gen 6–35, it is Yahweh who makes a *shem* great (ואגדלה שםך [Gen 12:2c]) for the paradigmatic patriarch in the lineage of Shem, Abram. As opposed to the speculative illicit knowledge of astrological traditions, there is the knowledge of good and evil, which delegitimizes any illicit knowledge from the heavens—which God himself condemned and ended by confusing the people’s languages. In covenantalism there is only the knowledge of good and evil, which God created in the Garden and is readily available to all, and is the only criteria by which to understand events and actions.

¹⁵⁶ *Jubilees* takes this anti-Enochic astrology polemic even further asserting that this knowledge comes from the fallen angels and is wrong.

Summary

With this reading, effectively, both legs of the Enochic/proto-apocalyptic apparatus for interpreting reality are undercut by the covenantalism of Genesis 1–11. For the *recontextualization* of Genesis in Persian Yehud there is no room for a chaotic world out of God's control, and there is no need for astrological traditions or proto-apocalyptic myths to determine what will happen in the present or the future. God has created an orderly world, and even though man's heart is inclined to sin he has the knowledge of good and evil and the ability to choose between them: if he chooses wisely he will be blessed, and conversely, if he chooses poorly he will be cursed. Further, there may have been an event in which angelic beings rebelled, but God himself rectified that situation. In addition, he also dealt with the improper behaviour of humans building for themselves a tower into the heavens to try and incorrectly determine the future from the movement of the heavenly bodies. The primordial speculations of apocalypticism are truncated and sterilized, countered and imprinted into the myths of covenantalism. The brilliance of this anti-Enochic polemic, if it is so, would be that it is not just 'revising' the proto-apocalyptic myths, but by transposing it into another story—that of covenantalism—the 'reality' of the Enochic myths are effectively neutered. Functionally, in subsuming the myths of apocalypticism as their own, and *recontextualizing* them 'properly' pro-covenantalism polemic is strengthened through a process of addition by subtraction.

This process may also explain why Genesis 1–11 is often considered so 'different,' in some respects, from much of the other material in Genesis. There is just a fantastical/mythical element to the primordial narrative: a talking snake tempting a woman with magic fruit; illicit supernatural-human relations; an impossible flood story; and a tower with its top in the 'heavens'. However, the highly speculative and supernatural character of apocalyptic myths may

have required myths that were almost as speculative and magical; especially if aspects of those apocalyptic myths were being incorporated into pro-covenantalism myths: even when truncated and sublimated they are still ‘supernaturally’ mythical.

At the *recontextual* stage of context for interpretation the myths of Genesis reflect the concerns of their authors regarding religious conflicts in Persian Yehud. They employ paradigmatic figures from the ‘past’ to legitimize their covenantalism ideology: the knowledge of good and evil, and the divine intervention and retribution of God for those who do not choose that knowledge. Furthermore, the covenantalism myths in Genesis incorporate and truncate important figures from the legitimizing myths of differing groups. By doing so, they sterilize the competing myth, and by a process of addition through subtraction, further disempower the competing myth by adding it to their own ‘proper’ story.

As we move into the next chapter we are going to offer yet another historical and social location for reading Genesis which provides us with another lens and context for reading and understanding the stories in Genesis. From this context we will offer a synchronic reading of Genesis 6–35 that continues some of the themes of covenantalism argued here. Further we will consider these themes against the social conflicts of Persian-era Yehud and contemporaneous literature from the period. If Genesis 1–11 is material that effectively counters and truncates the speculation of apocalypticism, then as we move forward, the following stories in Genesis provide a model within the thought world of covenantalism whereby the landscape of the ‘past’ establishes proper behaviour for those who seek Yahweh’s blessing.

We will see how these myths are also part of a process of social and ethnic control in which the cultural and political elite of Yehud—empowered by the Persian empire—understand the ‘past’ as part of paradigmatic narrative that legitimates their social and political programs in

Yehud to cement their control of the area and resources. This narrative begins in Genesis 6 and is bookended by the Jacob/Israel cycle in Genesis 35, and it is from the development of these two stories, and the paradigmatic actions of the supposed patriarchs from the past, that the rhetoric of the Yehud elite is essentially seen to be part of their socio-historical context.

Chapter 4: The Social Conflicts of Persian Yehud in the Myths of Genesis

In the prior chapter we attempted to read the myths of Genesis 1–11 as an expression of the religious conflicts of Persian Yehud, which reflected diverse opinions concerning the origin of evil, and the knowledge of good and evil in the ideology of covenantalism. The goal of this chapter is to consider archetypal endogamous marriage presentations in Genesis 6–35, and compare the relationship between the paradigmatic actions and words of the patriarchs in Genesis with cohering themes in Ezra and Nehemiah. The main hypothesis in this chapter argues that the myths of Genesis reflect the social/political/ethnic concerns of the elite in Persian Yehud concerning appropriate (endogamous) and inappropriate (exogamous) marriage practices, and this concern can be found in their *recontextualizations* of the myths of the paradigmatic patriarchs.

This approach brings together the two main components of the method proposed in the opening chapters: one, a synchronic/*recontextual* reading of Genesis that suggests “The final form represents a recontextualization of the pre-existing material for a new socio-historical setting. The resulting text must be read as a new (or at least different) text in the social situation of its production and reception.”¹⁵⁷ And two, comparing Genesis with contemporaneous literature, and by doing so, arguing that if the function of the narratives concerning the Yehud elite in other Persian-era books in some way coheres with the interests and concerns of Genesis, then, “those elite interests can plausibly be construed as the social and intellectual context of the book of Genesis.”¹⁵⁸ We will utilize this method to analyze portions of Genesis 6–35, and using the lens of contemporaneous literature (inappropriate marriages in Ezra and Nehemiah) observe

¹⁵⁷ Trotter, *Reading Hosea*, 10.

¹⁵⁸ Heard, *Dynamics of Diselection*, 16.

what the paradigmatic actions and words of the patriarchs in Genesis relate concerning the topic of appropriate and inappropriate marriages.

In pursuing this line of reasoning we will begin in Genesis 6 which paradigmatically demonstrates from the landscape of the distant ‘past’ what happens when people enter inappropriate relationships and do not end them. From that narrative we will turn to the genealogies of the sons of Noah which paradigmatically answers the question of the blessed family line, and ultimately leads to the important paradigmatic patriarch Abram/Abraham. In reviewing the Abram myths we will also examine the paradigmatic actions of Abram in response to inappropriate marriages, and the model he supplies for social programs of endogamy in Yehud with his interactions between Ishmael, Hagar, and Sarai. Finally, we will examine an extremely important myth for this theme in Genesis: God protecting and blessing Jacob/Israel, and promising him the land *after* his sons slaughter the men of Shechem. When all of these myths are viewed together we will see how they could function within the rhetoric and polemic of the returnees in the *recontextualization* of the myths they employ in Genesis, and how that polemic is also reflected in contemporaneous literature of the time period from the same putative group.

Important Literary Devices in Genesis

Before turning to the main polemic and ‘theme’ of Genesis 6–35 there are three important literary devices and thematic patterns for the current reading which, when understood through the interpretive lens being employed here and the proposed socio-historical period, significantly enhances the polemic of the final recontextualization of Genesis in the social and ethnic conflicts of Persian Yehud. However, to understand the utility of these literary devices in analyzing Gen 6–35 some of the working assumptions of scholars pertaining to the new perspective on Yehud

as a Persian colony with a diverse population mentioned in the first chapter are worth re-highlighting for the proposed socio-historical situation:

- The Babylon incursions of the early sixth century B.C.E. removed a minority of the population of Jerusalem.
- Only a small minority of the descendents of these deportees migrated from Babylonia to Yehud in 539, and they migrated over a period of several decades.
- The community of Yehud was not unified but experienced substantial social conflict.
- Yehud was a site for ethnic conflict and ethnic definition, perhaps setting the stage for later understandings as well.¹⁵⁹

As stated in the preceding chapters, the historical reconstruction favored here suggests that the province of Yehud experienced significant societal upheaval during the Persian period. Part of the social conflict appears to have been concerns over marriage practices. In addition, throughout this era there would have been a variety of influences which would have contributed to the political scenario: imperial policy, immigration of people groups, and inconsistent leadership structures—sometimes local, sometimes imperial—all which may have added to the political conflict in Jerusalem. The literature being reviewed in this thesis is from the small group with ethnic ties to Yehud who returned from Persia as a ruling minority elite with authority from the Persian empire, and a major component of their social and political program—whether to maintain power, reflective of practices developed while abroad, or an exclusive practice elevated and enforced in Yehud to maintain their position of authority—appears to have been the practice of endogamy in order to be part of the true ‘Israel’.

It is from this possible socio-historical situation that some of the literary devices in Genesis gain plausible added rhetorical force. Among the literary devices in Genesis there are three important devices in accordance with the proposed socio-historical situation: one, patriarchs coming into the land from the ‘East’ (and God’s ‘promise of the land’ to those

¹⁵⁹ Berquist, “Approaching Yehud,” 3-4.

persons); two, selection of a blessed patriarch and disselection of another family member; and three, the younger supplanting the elder. These three literary devices set the scene for the main theme of Genesis and would have functioned very well polemically in the social conflicts of Yehud. We will briefly review these three devices before turning to the main argument of this chapter.

The first important literary device and setting for the plot of Genesis is the East. In Genesis, most of the patriarchal figures arrive in the “Promised Land” from the East: Abram the ‘father’ of the nations is born there; in Genesis 12 the land of Canaan is promised to him, and in chapter 13 he settles in the land. Before Jacob/Israel leaves to travel east to his own people group his father Isaac blesses him, “May he give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien—land that God gave to Abraham” (Gen 28:4). From this blessing Jacob travels to Bethel—though the narrative continuity is briefly broken by Esau’s marriage to Ishmael’s daughter—and the land is promised to him by God,

“I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” (Gen 28:13-15)

Jacob/Israel travels east, marries wives from the East (an important point we will return to below), and prospers in the East before returning to the land that was promised to him. There is a consistent theme in the narrative of Genesis: patriarchs come from the East and the land is promised to *them* by God himself.¹⁶⁰ In the social conflicts that existed between returnee and

¹⁶⁰ Other important figures also have ties to the East: Isaac’s wife is from their people group in the East and Joseph is born in the East (who also prospers and rises in a governmental role in a foreign land).

natives this theme could have been exploited with much rhetorical force: as the blessed patriarchs came from the East so too the returnees come from the East; as God protected them and promised them the land so too the returnees are blessed and have the same promise from God.

A second consistent literary device in Genesis is one of selection and deselection.¹⁶¹ For every patriarch that is ‘selected’ by God, there is a ‘deselected’ close family member. Abram is selected (Gen 12:1–3; Gen 12:7; Gen 13:14–17; Gen 15:7, 18–21; Gen 18:19), but Lot is deselected (Gen 13; Gen 19:30–38). Isaac is selected (Gen 17:19–21; Gen 26:23), but Ishmael is deselected and *sent away* (Gen 16:11–12; Gen 17:18–21; Gen 21:8–14). Jacob is selected (Gen 27: 29; Gen 28: 13–15; Gen 35:11–12), but Esau is deselected (Gen 25: 29– 34; Gen 27: 37, 40), and while not explicitly ‘sent away’ in the text, when Jacob/Israel encounters Esau on his return to the land his brother is living in Edom. The ‘sending away’ of the deselected is a concept we will return to below, but briefly, in a political setting in which power structures are being reorganized according to those with political power supplied by the Persian Empire; land ownership is possibly being reorganized; and a possible program of ending exogamous marriages and sending away the wives and children of those relationships is, at the very least, being strongly argued for by the elite; the pattern of deselection in Genesis would carry much rhetorical force in the function of these myths politically and socially.

A third consistent theme in the narratives of Genesis is that of the younger supplanting the elder. The younger Jacob supplants the elder Esau; the younger Joseph supplants his brothers,

¹⁶¹ Heard calls the non-selection, ‘deselection’: “I prefer the neologism *deselection* to *deselection*... despite the terms’ synonymy and near-homophony. While *deselection* parses into *de-* + *selection*, *deselection* parses into *dis-* + *election*, forming a more precise parallel to *election*.” Heard, *Dynamics of Deselection*, 3, n. 3. I find it an interesting use of the prefix ‘dis’ in the conflicts being discussed throughout this study as it expresses negation (disadvantage), or denotes removal, separation, or expulsion which is, I would suspect, a highly possible way those who had such rhetoric used to exclude them may have felt.

and the younger Ephraim supplants the elder Manasseh. In an environment of immigration by those given imperial authority to settle in the land where they had ethnic roots there may have been native persons who felt their claim and right to certain places was better founded, perhaps based on legends or competing genealogies associating themselves with ancient landholders. However, the polemical value of having the younger supplant the elder would be forceful for the returnees to Yehud.

In total then, following the literary devices of this reading, Genesis would function rhetorically as a legitimating narrative in the conflicts of Persian Yehud. Those who came from Babylon authorized with imperial power could also claim that their real sanction came from their God and the past: like the patriarchs the returnees also traveled from the East; just like the patriarchs the returnees were promised the land by divine initiative; and, possibly, just as in the ‘past’ the “people of the land” and the returnees are represented in the stories of Genesis by those who were ‘elder’, who had inhabited the land for longer and who were disselected and ultimately supplanted by those who were ‘younger’ and selected by God himself. This then is part of the literary ethos of Genesis; these stories are imbued with patterns and devices that appear to favour a polemic that would be in the support of the minority group who had returned to the land from the East, and were using and reimagining common myths to express their understanding of their social location and situation. There are a variety of different avenues we could pursue using this method (e.g. the legitimation of land rights in Yehud through the Genesis myths). However, for the remainder of this study we will focus on an important theme in Genesis, and similar concerns found in contemporaneous literature: endogamous and exogamous marriages.

Gen 6–35: The Consequences of Cursed Exogamy and the Divine Blessing of Endogamy

Genesis 6

The main study in this chapter begins with an important myth that was a significant part of the last chapter where it was suggested that the primordial speculations of apocalypticism were appropriated, truncated, and neutered in Genesis 1–11; and imprinted into the story of covenantalism. In addition, it was suggested that there was not just a ‘revising’ of the fountainhead Enochic myth, but functionally, in subsuming the myth and explaining what it ‘really means’, it became part of the larger themes and rhetoric of the final recontextualization of Genesis. This is perhaps one of the more important working assumptions for this study: yes, the Enochic myth and the many other myths in Genesis may have changed over time, they may have even been ‘borrowed’ from other cultures, but in the final *recontextualization* of Genesis in the proposed socio-historical setting “The resulting text must be read as a new (or at least different) text in the social situation of its production and reception.”¹⁶² Therefore, in this chapter we are going to place the Sons of God myth as a bookend or *frame story* to another important myth in Genesis, the Jacob/Israel Shechem myth, and seek to understand how it could be part of the whole within Genesis 6–35. Furthermore, we will see how these myths reflect similar concerns of an author(s) in Persian Yehud concerning endogamous marriages by comparing Genesis with contemporaneous literature.

In the first chapter we reviewed some dominant methods for scholars concerning Genesis, which interprets Genesis as ‘developing’ over time, and focuses on sources. This approach often leaves Gen 6:1–4 dislocated from the material around it. With the alternate method proposed, a historical context has been identified along with cohering themes from contemporaneous Second Temple literature to inform a literary reading of the Sons of God story

¹⁶² Trotter, *Reading Hosea*, 10.

attempting to integrate the passage as something consistent within the themes of Genesis. In chapter two a prominent theme and concern of contemporaneous literature for the final recontextualization of Genesis, Ezra and Nehemiah, was identified: the denunciation and cessation of mixed marriages. In beginning the investigation of this theme in Genesis, and specifically considering Gen 6:1–4, Ezra 9 supplies some ideological context,

After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, “The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons. *Thus the holy seed has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands*, and in this faithlessness the officials and leaders have led the way (Ezra 9:1–2) [emphases mine]

In this passage there is the scenario that has led to so much of the conflict recorded in the stories of Ezra and Nehemiah: the זרע הקדש, the ‘holy seed’, has mixed itself with the people of the land. Once this abomination has occurred, the solution to such a scandal is suggested in Neh 9:2: the זרע ישראל, the “seed of Israel”, must separate itself from the “sons of that which is foreign.” The appropriate response to exogamy is commanded in Ezra and Nehemiah, enacted by the end of both books, and, as we will see, acted out in the paradigmatic myths of the patriarchs in Genesis. Interestingly, in using the landscape of the mythic past as a legitimating narrative for ethnic purity, the author(s) of Genesis do not begin with a ‘blessing’ for those with correct marriage practices; rather, they begin with the ‘curse’: what if the people *do not separate themselves from the people of the land*? The paradigmatic response to that question is offered in Genesis, and is also seconded by the author(s) of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Gen 6:1–4 does not begin a new section in Genesis but continues, and is part of, the genealogy of Noah, “Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth” (Gen 5:32). The genealogy of Noah does not conclude until Gen 9:29 as it is

‘interrupted’ by the account of the flood.¹⁶³ Therefore, it is sound to conclude, at least from the perspective of the redactor/author(s) of Genesis, that this lengthy section which supplements the תולדת of Noah is connected and somehow related in its *entirety* (the beginning of the genealogy of Noah Gen 5:32; the flood story Gen 6:1–9:28; the end of Noah’s genealogy Gen 9:29). After the formulaic תולדת introduction, the story of Noah’s genealogy continues:

When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. Then the LORD said, “My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years.” The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown (Gen 6:1–4)

Within the ethnic conflicts concerning exogamous marriages and the lens suggested for reading certain passages within Genesis, a possible *basic* meaning of this passage: this is a mythic example of the “holy seed” intermingling with the people of the land. However, this passage must not be viewed in isolation from its context within Noah’s תולדת, how it was written *in its final recontextualization*, and how it *relates* to the material surrounding it. Therefore, what follows the Sons of God ‘section’ is just as important.

Below we will review other myths from Genesis concerning the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob. From this analysis it will be argued that their particular myths are paradigmatic for the proper response of Israel to the issue of mixed marriages: they should end the marriage and send away the wives and children of the mixed marriages. However, in Genesis 6 we get a different prototype: what is the response of God if mixed marriages are not ended? That paradigmatic answer is found immediately following the passage concerning the relationship between the Sons of God and the Daughters of Men:

¹⁶³ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 129.

The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, “I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them” (Gen 6:5–7)

As we will see, immediately following the events at Shechem, at the Bethel blessing, Genesis presents God’s response to human *action*; in the flood narrative a different model is offered:

God’s response to human *inaction*.

Ultimately, within this context, the *recontextualization* of the myth is short and its message is plain: God will punish those who practice exogamy, and at one time ‘in the past’, along with people choosing evil constantly (non-covenantalism as reviewed in the last chapter), it made God so angry he almost destroyed the entire world. However, Genesis does not only deal with God’s punishment of this practice. The myth of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Men is merely the beginning of wider polemic concerning the holy seed and appropriate marriages in Genesis. This polemic also concerns the blessed lineage after the flood (women you can marry), and those cursed persons “the people of the land” (women you cannot).

Genesis 7–10

In the study of appropriate wives and marriages in Genesis tracing the presentation of the familial line of the post-flood survivors is illuminating. After the flood, Noah plants a vineyard, drinks too much wine and becomes drunk, and “Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside” (Gen 9:22). When Noah awakes from his drunken slumber he knows what his youngest son has done to him,¹⁶⁴ however, the curse pronounced

¹⁶⁴ Hebrew reads literally “little son”, however, the usual listing for the brothers is “Shem, Ham, and Japhet,” so the question of whether the list is chronological or not is valid. If the text should indeed read ‘younger son’ for Ham it would be an interesting polemic in the context of the discussion above pertaining to the younger

does not fall on Ham but on Ham's son Canaan, "Cursed be Canaan; lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers" (Gen 9:25). In addition, not only is a curse pronounced on the grandson Canaan, but a blessing is declared over Noah's son Shem, "Blessed by the Lord my God be Shem; and let Canaan be his slave" (Gen 9:26). Tracing the subsequent genealogies of the 'blessed' Shem and the 'cursed' Canaan is important to the development of the story in Genesis.¹⁶⁵

After Noah's blessing of his son and cursing of his grandson there are three genealogies, and in these genealogies the familial lines of Shem, Ham, and Japheth are traced (Genesis 10). The first genealogy concerns Noah's son Japheth. The second genealogy covers the cursed descendants of Ham, and from this dubious family tree spring the sons Canaan, Egypt, the grandson Nimrod who establishes Babylon and Assyria, and other grandsons whom beget the Philistines, the Jebusites, and the Amorites (among others). The many nations with which 'Israel' contends and who are often the antagonists throughout the biblical narratives come from the cursed line of Canaan and occupy the land which is promised to the patriarchs. The third genealogy reviews the blessed genealogy of Shem. This genealogy is the first of two in Genesis concerning Shem; one genealogy is branched or segmented, and the other is linear. The branched genealogy of Genesis 10 records Shem's descendants in multiple lists (e.g., the descendants of

supplanting the elder as a thematic device in Genesis. However, while those who remained in the land may have felt as they had a 'better' or 'older' claim to the land, this genealogy may have been used polemically to strengthen the returnees claims: in their myth Ham is the 'younger', and the blessed ones coming from the East are part of the Shemite, the 'elder', blessing and heritage.

¹⁶⁵ Westermann suggests, "The genealogies are an essential constitutive part of the primeval story and form the framework of everything that is narrated in Gen 1-11." Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 4. Steinberg argues that "Genesis is a book whose plot is genealogy. Through the interrelationship of narratives within a genealogical framework, a chronology is established which recounts the general ancestry of universal history leading to Israel's specific beginnings," Naomi Steinberg, "The Genealogical Framework of the Family Stories in Genesis," in *Narrative Research on the Hebrew Bible* (M. Amihai, G. W. Coats, and A. M. Solomon eds.; Semeia 46 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 41-50, here 41. While Genesis is often separated into a 'primeval' and patriarchal' history, the genealogies may indicate that the author(s)/redactor(s) envisioned no such division. Noah is the tenth from Adam, and Abram is the tenth from Shem (and for the sake of continuity, Moses is the seventh from Abraham). Considering these genealogies interweave the various narratives and lead to the important promise of the land and blessings of Yahweh to Israel their interconnectedness forming an entire cohesive narrative should not be discounted.

Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram), but a singularly important family line can be traced in this genealogy: Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, and Peleg. However in this branched *toledot* the Shem line is abbreviated, and ends with a review of Peleg's brother Joktan and his descendants. This first genealogy of Shem ends with the notice, "These are the families of Noah's sons, according to their genealogies, in their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood" (Gen 10:32).

Subsequent to the family tree of Noah is the brief Tower of Babel story. In parallel to the nations spreading abroad on the earth in the above genealogy's ending, the Lord scatters people over the face of the earth in response to their attempt to build a tower to heaven. After this brief myth, the Genesis story then returns to another genealogy concerning Shem. In this second, linear genealogy, rather than listing all of Shem's sons and descendants, one particular line is highlighted. The genealogy begins with the shortened list from the earlier segmented genealogy: Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, and Peleg; however, this genealogy does not stop at Peleg but continues: Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, and Terah. This second genealogy is important as the sons of Terah are Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Therefore with these two genealogies we see the cursed line of Ham/Canaan leading to the 'enemies' of Israel, and the blessed line of Shem leading to the patriarch Abram.¹⁶⁶ The blessing and cursing by Noah of his sons and the subsequent genealogies are important to the development of the story in Genesis. First, they transition the story from the flood narrative to the Abram cycle, and second, they explain—though in a manner that may be unfamiliar to modern readers—how the different nations arose, and etiologically justify the seed of Israel as blessed by God (Shemites), and the people of the land (Canaanites) as cursed even from the days of the great flood when God had to judge all flesh. It is from this

¹⁶⁶ The pattern of genealogies 'telling stories' is similar to what was demonstrated in the last chapter concerning the genealogies of Cain and Seth.

genealogical validation and transition from the myths of Genesis 1–11 that the important paradigmatic myths of Abram begin, and to which we now turn.

Genesis 12

The story of Abram actually begins in Gen11:29.¹⁶⁷ Abram is living with his father Terah in Ur of the Chaldeans, takes a wife from Ur named Sarai the daughter of Haran, and while traveling to Canaan with his father settles in the northern Mesopotamian city of Haran. After the death of his father Terah, God commands Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name [אַבְרָם] great, so that you will be a blessing” (Gen 12:1–2). The theme of blessing and cursing from the Canaanite and Shemite genealogies is also continued in Abram’s calling, “I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:3).

In the myth Abram travels to the promised land from the East as the Lord had told him along with his wife and nephew Lot, but “At that time the Canaanites were in the land” (Gen 12:6); however, the Lord appears to Abram and says, “To your *seed* I will give this land.”¹⁶⁸ The Abram prototype begins a blueprint that will be continued with the patriarch Jacob/Israel and the putative ethnic group of Israel in the hexateuchal stories: the chosen ones come into the promised land, but there is a ‘people of the land’ already living there; however, in Genesis the land is promised to the Shemite line: to Abram (by God, Gen 15:7; by God, Gen 17:8); to Isaac (by

¹⁶⁷ Interestingly, among the many *toledot* in Genesis there is not one for Abram. The persons who introduce a *toledot*: Adam (5:1), Noah (6:9), the sons of Noah (10:1), Shem (11:10), Terah (11:27), Ishmael (25:12), Isaac (25:19), Esau (36:1; 36:9), and Jacob (37:2). P. J. Wiseman, *Ancient Records and the Structure of Genesis: A Case for Literary Unity* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 60.

¹⁶⁸ Hebrew *zera* for seed, a concept reflected in Ezra 9:2 when *zera haqodesh*, the “holy seed,” is mixed with the people of the land; and Neh 9:2, the *zera yisrael*, the “seed of Israel,” must separate itself from the “sons of that which is foreign.”

God, Gen 26:3); to Jacob/Israel (by Isaac, Gen 28:4; by God, Gen 28:13; by God, Gen 35:12), and to the descendants of Jacob/Israel (by God, Gen 17:8; by God, Gen 35:12) .

The review of the genealogies of Noah's offspring and the beginning of the story of Abram is important as it sets the background for 'cursed' people and the 'blessed' ones who are promised the land by God, but is also consistent with a theme suggested above: patriarchs coming from the East into the land (Abram, Jacob, Joseph). However, there is a second interconnected pattern along with the eastern origins of the patriarchs: matriarchs come from the East as well (Sarai, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel). Abram takes as his wife his half-sister, the daughter of his father but not of his mother. This is the beginning of endogamy in *practice* and as the fulfillment of an *oath* among the patriarchs in Genesis. After the death of Sarah and nearing the end of his own life Abraham charges his primary servant to get his son a wife. He makes his servant swear, "that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, but will go to my country and to my kindred and get a wife for my son Isaac" (Gen 24:3–4, 37–38). Abraham's servant travels back to the related ethnic group in the East and returns with a bride for Isaac, the matriarch Rebekah. This pattern, and further polemic involving marriage practices and acceptable/unacceptable wives, is continued in the story of Isaac and Rebekah's sons.

Under extenuating circumstances Jacob/Israel is forced to travel east to his own people group; however before doing so, amid the family conflicts and trickery, Jacob's brother Esau is married, "When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite; and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah" (Gen 26:34–35). As the story is told in Genesis, while Jacob is preparing to flee Esau's fury, the wives of Esau lead Rebekah to say to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the Hittite women. If

Jacob marries one of the Hittite women such as these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?” (Gen 27:46). Therefore Isaac calls his son Jacob and says:

You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women. Go at once to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father; and take as wife from there one of the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother. May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and numerous, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien—land that God gave to Abraham (Gen 28:1–4)¹⁶⁹

When Esau discovers that Isaac has blessed Jacob and sent him away to take a wife from his relatives in Paddan-Aram charging him “You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women,” Esau subtly responds by going to Ishmael and marrying his daughter. While in the East Jacob/Israel takes Leah and Rachel for wives, and along with their concubines, fathers the sons that become the namesakes for the twelve tribes of Israel.

The paradigmatic actions of the patriarchs in these myths model endogamy in *practice* and *oath-fulfillment*, and answer an important question within the social and ethnic conflicts of Persian Yehud: where do appropriate wives come from? Furthermore, the words and actions of the patriarchs—the alleged landscape of the ‘past’—reflect and echo the same concerns from contemporaneous literature in the Persian period. Therefore, functionally, in the paradigmatic myths of Genesis, the landscape of the ‘past’ is important as it echoes the ‘voices’ and concerns of Ezra and Nehemiah in the practice and words of the patriarchs, which would add much rhetorical force to the claims of those arguing for endogamous practices in Yehud:

¹⁶⁹ Some of the themes suggested in this chapter converge in this blessing of Abraham: travel to the East, marry a wife from the East, and a promise of possession of the land that was given to Abraham. This promise/pattern is reaffirmed in the very next Jacob/Israel story when he stops for the evening in Bethel, “I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” (Gen 28:13–15).

Ezra 9:12

וְעַתָּה בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם אֲלֹתֵתְנֹו לְבָנֵיהֶם וּבְנֵיהֶם אֲלֹתֵשְׂאוּ לְבָנֵיכֶם

Therefore do not give (natan) your daughters to their sons, neither take (nasa') their daughters for your sons

Neh 10:30 (10:31 Heb.)

וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא־נָתַן בְּנֵיתֵינוּ לְעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם לֹא נִקַּח לְבָנֵינוּ

We will not give (natan) our daughters to the peoples of the land or take (laqach) their daughters for our sons

Neh 13:25

אִם־תִּתְּנוּ בְּנֵיתֵיכֶם לְבָנֵיהֶם וְאִם־תִּשְׂאוּ מִבְּנֵיהֶם לְבָנֵיכֶם וְלָכֶם

You shall not give (natan) your daughters to their sons, or take (nasa') their daughters for your sons or for yourselves.

Gen 24:3–4

וְאֲשָׁבִיעֲךָ בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לְבָנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּקִרְבּוֹ

And I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not get (laqach) a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live

Gen 28:1–2

לֹא־תִקַּח אִשָּׁה מִבְּנוֹת כְּנַעַן: כּוּם לֹךְ פָּדְנָה אֶרֶם בֵּיתָהּ בְּתוּאֵל אַבְי אִמְךָ וְקַח־לָךְ מִשָּׁם אִשָּׁה מִבְּנוֹת לָבָן

You shall not marry (laqach) one of the Canaanite women. Go at once to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father; and take (laqach) as wife from there one of the daughters of Laban

Just as Abram, Isaac, and Jacob did not marry from the daughters of the Canaanites, just as

Abram made his servant swear not to procure his son a wife from among the Canaanites, just as

Isaac commanded Jacob/Israel not to marry the Canaanites, so to Ezra echoes God's words not to

intermarry with the peoples of the land (Ezra 9); the people agree in a covenant to adhere to the

law of God and not intermarry with the people of the land (Nehemiah10); and Nehemiah makes

the people take an oath in the name of God not to intermarry with the peoples of the land (Nehemiah 13). In the paradigmatic examples of the patriarchs, in the oaths and commands of the patriarchs, in the words of God and Ezra, and in the covenant and oath in Nehemiah the imperative is crystal clear: *do not* give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or yourselves.

However, just as clearly from the narratives in Ezra and Nehemiah, it appears some people had entered into *exactly* these sorts of condemned unions. The apparent practice of exogamy in these texts leads naturally to the next section and question: what should 'Israel' do concerning mixed marriages?

Genesis 16 & 21: The Paradigmatic Actions of Abraham

An important archetypal myth in Genesis concerning the wives and children of mixed marriages which would have functioned with didactic and polemical value for actual persons within the Yehud ethnic conflicts would be the Abram/Ishmael model. In the story Sarai says to Abram, “‘You see that the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.’ And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai” (Gen 16:2). After Hagar becomes pregnant Sarai deals harshly with her and sends her away, but an angel of the Lord commands her to return, and to Abram and Hagar a son is born: Ishmael. Even though Abram has a child with a foreigner God still blesses Abram, changes his name to Abraham, and the covenant of circumcision is enacted. However, it is important to note in the development of the story that Ishmael’s birth is prior to the covenant of circumcision; furthermore, God promises Abraham that he will have a son with Sarah during the establishment

of the covenant of circumcision, and swears that his covenant will continue with Isaac and Abraham's descendants through Sarah, the son and descendants of endogamy.

After the birth of Isaac, Sarah witnesses the two boys playing together and she says to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac" (Gen 21:10). At first Abraham is hesitant to send away Ishmael and the matter is very distressing to him on account of his son (Gen 21:11); however, God speaks to Abraham and says, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you" (Gen 21:12). Accordingly, Hagar and Ishmael are sent away; moreover, Ishmael is not the only child of Abraham's that is sent away. Abraham takes another wife, Keturah, and has six sons by her. As with Ishmael, these sons do not share in Abraham's inheritance, "Abraham gave all he had to Isaac. But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, while he was still living, and he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country" (Gen 25:5–6).

Clearly, according to the books examined thus far, the blessed line of Israel is not to be intermarrying with the people of the land; however, just as plainly, the texts seem to preserve a distinct memory of some sort of inappropriate exogamous marriages (at least "inappropriate" according to the authorial community of the books we are discussing). However, ending the marriages leads to a further complication: what does one do with wives and children from the unacceptable marriages? Fortunately, once again, the words and actions of the paradigmatic patriarchs and the landscape of the mythic 'past' answer that question. Functionally, the above Abram myth provides the solution and the justification for what must be done concerning the

wives and children of mixed marriages, and supplies the ancient archetypal behaviour for the covenants entered in Ezra and Nehemiah:

Ezra 10:2–3

אֲנַחְנוּ מַעַלְנוּ בִּאלֹהֵינוּ וְנָשָׁב נָשִׁים נְכָרִיּוֹת מֵעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ וְעַתָּה יִשְׁמְקֵנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־זֹאת: וְעַתָּה נִכְרַת־בְּרִית לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ
לְהוֹצִיא כָּל־נָשִׁים וְהַנּוֹלָד מֵהֶם בַּעֲצַת אֲדָנָי וְהַתַּרְדִּים בְּמִצְוַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְכַתְּנָה יַעֲשֶׂה

We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. So now let us make a covenant with our God to send away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law

Ezra 10:10

וַיָּקָם עֲזָרָא הַכֹּהֵן וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אַתֶּם מַעַלְתֶּם וַתִּשְׁיבוּ נָשִׁים נְכָרִיּוֹת לְהוֹסִיף עַל־אֲשַׁמַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל: וְעַתָּה תִּגְנוּ תוֹדָה לַיהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם וַעֲשׂוּ רְצוֹנוֹ וְהִבְדְּלוּ מֵעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ וּמִן־הַנָּשִׁים הַנְּכָרִיּוֹת

Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have trespassed and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. Now make confession to the LORD the God of your ancestors, and do his will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives

Neh 9:2

וַיִּבְדְּלוּ יִזְרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל בְּנֵי נֹכַר וַיַּעֲמְדוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ עַל־חַטֹּאתֵיהֶם וְעוֹנוֹת אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם

Then those of Israelite descent (zera' yisrael) separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their ancestors

Gen 21

וַתֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָהָם גֵּרֶשׁ הָאֵמָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־בְּנָהּ כִּי לֹא יִירָשׁ בְּוַהֲמָהּ הַזֹּאת עִם־בְּנִי עִם־יִצְחָק:
וַיֵּרַע הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵי אַבְרָהָם עַל אֹדֶת בְּנוֹ:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אֶל־יֵרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עַל־הַנָּעַר וְעַל־אִמָּתְךָ כֹּל־אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלֶיךָ שָׂרָה שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ כִּי בִי־צִחָק יִקְרָא
לָהּ זֶרַע... וַיִּשְׁפֹּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקְחֵם לֶחֶם וְחֵמֶת מַיִם וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הַגֵּר שָׁם עַל־שִׁכְמָהּ וְאֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וַיִּשְׁלַחָהּ

So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.” The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you... So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took

bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent (shalach) her away

Gen 25:6

וְלִבְנֵי הַפִּילִגְשִׁים אֲשֶׁר לְאַבְרָהָם נָתַן אַבְרָהָם מִתְּנֻת וְיִשְׁלָחֵם מֵעַל יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בְּעוֹדָו חַי הַדְּמָה אֶל־אֶרֶץ קְדֻם

But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, while he was still living, and he sent (shalach) them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country

The covenants of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the actions of the patriarch Abraham are unambiguous: the wives and children must be ‘sent away’.

Christopher Heard in his work on Genesis also notes the connection between these books, and suggests a very strong polemic for this myth, along with Ezra and Nehemiah, in the social conflicts of Yehud,

Such a deed [exogamy], once done, can be undone only through divorce and disinheritance, and his [Abraham’s] is precisely the “solution” depicted by the authors of Ezra and Nehemiah. Seen alongside this “solution,” Abraham’s dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael stands as both a paradigm for action and a reassurance for the men called upon to undertake similar drastic actions. God demands that the voice of Sarah (or that of Nehemiah [or Ezra]) be obeyed. No matter what one’s attachment to one’s half-Egyptian son, no matter whether he was circumcised at eight days (or thirteen years), God insists that the children of intermarriages, and their mothers, be dismissed from Abraham’s household and from Yehud. Nor should the husbands and fathers involved in such procedures give a second thought to the welfare of their erstwhile wives and children. Their welfare is no longer the husbands’ concern; it is now God’s concern, so the husbands can go on about their business as usual¹⁷⁰

The normative value of this section of the Abram myth is the radical dissolution of unacceptable marriages, and the resultant action that must be taken if inappropriate exogamous marriages have taken place: the wives and children of such improper unions should be sent away. And, as in the section above concerning appropriate wives, the landscape of the mythic ‘past’ in Genesis coheres with the words of Ezra and Nehemiah. However, the polemic concerning exogamous marriages does not end in Genesis with the Abram cycle, there is a further model supplied in the

¹⁷⁰ Heard, *Dynamics of Diselection*, 176.

book which would significantly enhance the proposed polemic of the Yehudian elite towards exogamy.

Genesis 12, 20, 26, 35: The Shechem Model

There is an obvious predicament inherent in the directive not to intermarry with the people of the land in Genesis, Ezra, and Nehemiah: what is the appropriate response if people do intermarry? Fortunately, for the author(s) of Ezra and Nehemiah, and those involved in the ethnic conflicts of Yehud, the landscape of the mythic ‘past’ and the archetypal actions of the patriarchs supplied that answer in the story of Abraham. In addition to Abraham’s example there is another model for this problem in Genesis that further enhances endogamous rhetoric: the response of Jacob’s sons to the marriage of Dinah and Shechem.

On the one hand, before fully engaging the endogamous polemic in this myth, it is worth noting that the Dinah/Shechem myth contains an irony in comparison with the rest of the Genesis myths: in the book there are three narratives that ‘defend’ the purity of the patriarchs amongst foreigners. In Genesis 12 Abram flees a famine in the land and goes down to Egypt, and tries to pass off the matriarch Sarai as his ‘sister’. However, the Pharaoh who takes the matriarch as his wife has his house afflicted with great plagues by יהוה. The result is that Sarai is left unsullied,¹⁷¹ and Pharaoh ‘blesses’ Abram and economically compensates him. In Genesis 20 Abraham again calls his wife Sarah his ‘sister’ amongst foreigners, and once again she is taken as a wife by a foreign king. However, the king Abimelech is warned by אלהים in a dream not to touch Sarah. Like Pharaoh, Abimelech returns Sarah to Abraham untouched and economically reimburses him.

¹⁷¹ Though the text does not say this explicitly; however, from context we can assume this is the case.

The third myth following this theme occurs in Genesis 26. Like his father Abraham in the second story above, Isaac travels to Gerar, and like his father in the first story above, he migrates there because of a famine; however in the first Abram story he travels to Egypt because of a famine,¹⁷² conversely, Isaac travels to Gerar during a famine because the Lord tells him not to go to Egypt. Nevertheless, Isaac, like his father, pretends that the matriarch Rebekah is really his sister. There is another variation in this story: Abimelech does not take the ‘sister’ as his wife but does observe that Isaac and Rebekah are intimate. Upon doing so the king warns all of the people and commands, “Whoever touches this man or his wife shall be put to death.” Once again, after the matriarch has been ‘restored’ to the husband, the patriarch prospers in a foreign land, but this time by his own hand.

In total then, while the patriarchs are amongst foreigners, one king is struck with a plague by God preventing him from touching the matriarch, one king is warned in a dream by God stopping him from touching a matriarch, and another king makes a command against touching “this man or his wife.” After the divine and kingly protection of their women, Abram/Abraham is economically compensated by the foreign powers and Isaac prospers economically amongst the foreigners in Gerar (as Jacob and Joseph also prosper in foreign lands). In the context of the social conflicts discussed in this chapter and a program of endogamy in Yehud, the purity of the ‘chosen’ women of Israel while they were in Babylon would have been important rhetorically, especially in the context of mixed marriages and their denunciation in Yehud. If there was a group proposing endogamous marriages within ‘Israel’ and asserting that the ‘holy seed’ and

¹⁷² The spoken word of God in the narrative follows the pattern of land promise to the Shemite genealogy already given to Abram, in this instance to Isaac, and later in the narrative will be carried onto Isaac’s son Jacob, “Do not go down to Egypt; settle in the land that I shall show you. Reside in this land as an alien, and I will be with you, and will bless you; for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will fulfill the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and will give to your offspring all these lands; and all the nations of the earth shall gain blessing for themselves through your offspring, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Gen 26:2–5).

‘seed of Israel’ *should not* be mixed with the ‘people of the land’ then paradigmatic texts modeling God’s faithfulness in protecting the women of Israel while abroad (i.e., in Babylon and Persia) would be *very* important polemically.

On the other hand, this protection pattern is ironic because not all of the women in the Genesis myths are as lucky as the aforementioned matriarchs. Upon Jacob/Israel’s return to the land with his sons and daughter they take up residence in Shechem, in the land of Canaan. When Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite (a descendant of Ham/Canaan), sees Jacob/Israel’s daughter Dinah he seizes her and lays with her by force.¹⁷³ After raping Dinah, Shechem grows tender towards her and asks his father Hamor to get Dinah to be his wife. When the sons of Jacob hear what has happened they are very angry, “because he had committed an outrage in Israel by lying with Jacob’s daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done” (Gen 34:7). Nonetheless, Hamor pleads with them, “Make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves” (Gen 34:9). The sons of Israel/Jacob answer deceitfully and suggest that if all of the men of Shechem become circumcised then, “we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live among you and become one people” (Gen 34:16). However, on the third day after every male has been circumcised, Dinah’s brothers come against the city killing Hamor and Shechem, take Dinah from Shechem’s house, kill all of the males, and plunder the city. Following the slaughter Jacob “does not condemn them for the massacre, for abusing the rite of circumcision, or even for breach of contract. Rather, he

¹⁷³ Similarly, in Neh 5:5 “Now our flesh is the same as that of our kindred; our children are the same as their children; and yet we are forcing our sons and daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been ravished; we are powerless, and our fields and vineyards now belong to others. “Because (in cases where they owned them) their fields were already mortgaged, the debtors were on the point (הנה + participle) of having to sell their children into debt-slavery; indeed, the process was already starting, as some of their daughters had already been “enslaved.” This word, נִכְבְּשׁוֹת, has sexual overtones at Esth 7:8, and the singling out of daughters here suggests some treatment separate from debt-slavery. It is thus probable that they were having to gratify the creditors’ lusts as payment for delaying foreclosure on the loans.” H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Dallas: Word, 1985), 238.

protests that the consequences of their action have made him unpopular.”¹⁷⁴ While it may be surprising that Jacob is not more critical of his sons’ murderous actions, to fully understand the context of Jacob’s reaction the connected story directly following the slaughter is important.

After the Shechem massacre, God speaks to Jacob, and commands him to go to Bethel and make an altar there. Jacob orders his household to put away their foreign gods and purify themselves. As they journey south, a terror from God falls on all of the cities, in order that they arrive safe in Bethel. Jacob builds an altar and God appears to him and blesses Jacob

“Your name is Jacob; no longer shall you be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.” So he was called Israel. God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall spring from you. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you” (Gen 35:10–12)

When Jacob arrives in the land his daughter is defiled by an *inhabitant of the land* promised to him. From this event the sons of Jacob ‘agree’ to give their sons to the inhabitants’ daughters and *vice versa*; however, when they radically abbreviate the mixed marriage agreement and take back their sister *then* God renames Jacob, Israel, and reiterates his promise earlier made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob from his first Bethel experience, *and to his offspring*. The result of the Shechem massacre is a blessing by God and a restatement of his promise to the patriarchs and Israel.

The challenge of reading the *recontextualization* of this myth is not judging it by some modern, or even ancient, ethical standard. Clearly, if it were actual or historical, rewarding a patriarch with blessings and land because men were killed to end a marriage would be abhorrent. However, in the same manner that modern script writers or movie producers are not judged as ‘evil’ every time a person or group of people die in a movie; similarly, normative myths should not be judged by such an ethnocentric standard. The *function* of the Shechem narrative is not to propose that the Yehudians should go on a murderous rampage to end mixed marriages; its

¹⁷⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50* (WBC 2; Dallas: Word, 1994), 316.

normative value was the radical dissolution of those marrying in such an unacceptable manner. Once again, the landscape of the mythic ‘past’ and the actions of the paradigmatic patriarchs answer a question: what is the appropriate response to mixed marriages? The solution to the problem of the mixed marriages is simple: end them.

The Genesis solution to exogamous marriages is, once again, also found in Ezra and Nehemiah. Therefore, functionally for the ‘crisis’ of exogamy in Yehud, the same predicament which occurred for ‘ancient’ Israel provides the appropriate solution to their contemporary problem, and supplies a model for their endogamous polemic:¹⁷⁵

Ezra 9:1–2

לֹא־נִבְדְּלוּ הָעָם יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם מֵעַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת... כִּי־נָשְׂאוּ מִבְּנוֹתֵיהֶם לָהֶם וּלְבָנֵיהֶם

The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands... For they have taken (nasa') some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons.

Ezra 10:2

אֲנַחְנוּ מֵעַלְנוּ בְּאֵלֵהֵינוּ וְנָשָׂב נָשִׁים נְכָרִיּוֹת מֵעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ

We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land

Neh 9:23

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם רָאִיתִי אֶת־הַיְּהוּדִים הַשֹּׁבִיבִים נָשִׁים אֲשֶׁדּוּדִיּוֹת עַמּוֹנִיּוֹת מוֹאבִּיּוֹת

In those days also I saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab

¹⁷⁵ Within the historical and social conflicts discussed here it is suggestive that Shechem would have been a city within the sub-province of Samaria. Though we can not pursue this line of reasoning here the polemic of Nehemiah, “Then those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners...” (Neh 9:2); “On that day they read from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God...” (Neh 13:1); amongst the other rhetoric concerning separating from foreigners in Genesis, Ezra, and Nehemiah already discussed, and the stories in Nehemiah concerning the removal of Tobiah the Ammonite from the Temple and the final actions of Nehemiah in the removal of Johoiada, son of the high priest, Eliashib, for marrying the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite (a leader in the Persian province of Samaria) would provide much fruitful discussions as to the function of the Temple, ethnic purity, and the political conflicts in Yehud during the Persian period.

Gen 34:9

בְּנֵיכֶם תִּתְּנוּ לָנוּ וְאֶת־בְּנֹתֵינוּ תִקַּח לָכֶם

Give (natan) your daughters to us, and take (laqach) our daughters for yourselves

Gen 34:16

וְנִתְּנוּ אֶת־בְּנֹתֵינוּ לָכֶם וְאֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם נִקַּח לָנוּ

Then we will give (natan) our daughters to you, and we will take (laqach) your daughters for ourselves

In all three texts there is a similar problem: the seed of Israel is intermarrying with the people of the land, and in all three there is a radical solution to the problem: Ezra rips his robe and mantle, tears out his hair and beard, sits appalled, and finally calls an assembly of repentance after which the people covenant to end the foreign marriages. Nehemiah curses people, beats some of them, pulls out their hair, and makes them take an oath not to marry the people of the land. The final action of Nehemiah reported is the chasing away of Johoiada, son of the high priest Eliashib, for marrying the daughter of a Samaritan official. In Genesis, Nehemiah's physical abuse is minor compared to what the sons of Jacob do to the citizens of Shechem: once agreeing to marriage, the sons of Jacob kill all of the proposed people of intermarriage. This action is not condemned in the story, and in fact, if judged by Yahweh's response, the story of the cessation of mixed marriages in Genesis is *rewarded* by the blessing of Yahweh to the patriarch Israel and his descendants.

Therefore, the *function* of the Shechem massacre in the Yehud social conflicts is not some historical *facticity* reporting how the sons of Jacob actually slaughtered a city full of foreign men that wanted their women for marriage, but rhetorically and *functionally* that they went to extreme lengths to put an end to mixed marriages even after they had given their word: "Undoubtedly, the heroes of this story, though they are the villains of the Joseph story, are

Dinah's brothers, particularly Simeon and Levi. Here they are portrayed as fiercely opposing intermarriage with the Canaanites of the land."¹⁷⁶ Ultimately, the value of this narrative for the Yehudian conflicts *is not* that the authors of Ezra and Nehemiah were suggesting to kill those of foreign descent,¹⁷⁷ but that they could look upon the landscape of the mythic 'past' and assert that as the sons of Jacob went to great lengths to ensure their sister was not married to a person of the land, so to must the citizens of 'Israel' *must* covenant with God to end mixed marriages.

The 'Message' of Genesis 6–35

In considering the 'message' or 'theme' of Genesis, the analysis in this chapter has focused on two bookends which form a narrative framework: on the one side mixed marriages which continue, and that finally God has to end; and on the other side, mixed marriages that humans end, and for which God blesses them. In the context of this reading, the Shechem/Bethel myths *crescendo* the paradigmatic lessons of the patriarchs concerning endogamy and exogamy: end mixed marriages and God will bless Israel.

Ultimately, in the context of this reading, the myth of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Men *is not* a cracked erratic boulder, a story so dislocated it is a trunk, but rather an integral part of the polemic of endogamy and God's response to those who do not end such a practice and rightly send away the wives and children of any improper union. This is not to suggest in any way that the story of the Sons of God could not be much more 'ancient' than Second Temple Yehud. In fact, I would suggest that the brilliance of the DH is that it accounts so reasonably for some material in the redaction of the text.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, humans of any time period can only

¹⁷⁶ Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 319.

¹⁷⁷ Though it may be consistent with the murderous mythic fantasies throughout the hexateuchal materials.

¹⁷⁸ As an example for how incredibly well the DH accounts for the apparent sources in some parts of Genesis consult Addendum A (P flood myth) on page 138, and addendum C (J flood narrative) on page 142

communicate in ideas, words, and stories that exist and correspond to some sort of sense between writer/speaker and audience/hearers. There is ample textual evidence that an archetypal template for communication in the ANE was the mixing of the divine and the human.¹⁷⁹ In fact, stories that featured divine beings marrying humans and siring children could have existed in a multiplicity of forms for hundreds of years, as could stories concerning global floods and patriarchal flood survivors, or concerning the origins of human beings; and, of course, we do have ample evidence of a variety of these very kinds of stories. However, identifying ancient sources, or story patterns, does not effectively explain why these stories were being brought together and told the way they were in the final *recontextualization* of Genesis. On the other hand, locating Genesis within the social conflicts represented in texts such as Ezra and Nehemiah, and identifying an important theme in these books, mixed marriages, does lead to a more holistic understanding of Gen 6:1–4 and its possible relationship to the material surrounding it.

It is the summary of the above comparisons and analyses that the Sons of God and the Daughters of Men myth begins a prominent theme in Genesis concerning appropriate wives

separated according to Speiser's identification. Identifying the P and J creation myths (Gen 1:1–2:4; Gen 2:5–3:24) and genealogies (P genealogy Gen 5; J genealogy Gen 4:17–26) is much easier as they are distinct blocks, but the flood accounts have been interwoven. However, once the narrative has been 'untangled' into distinct sources, the literary consistency of both stories on their own is quite compelling.

¹⁷⁹ From a number of kingdoms which produced the setting of the HB evidence has been collected showing that their respective kings were often seen in a sense as divine, and that they were indeed called sons of the various gods (Meredith G. Kline, "Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1–4," *WTJ* 24:2 (1962): 187–204). In Egypt, though the king is not a deity, his titles appear to show that he is in measure a god. In his official title he is called "perfect god," in the early Old Kingdom even "greatest god" (Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* [New York: Cornell University Press, 1982], 141). Pharaoh was called the "son of Re" and was sometimes depicted as suckling at the breast of Isis (Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 266). The Hittite king was called "son of the weather god," and the title of his mother was *Tawannaanas* ("mother of the god"), (Leroy Binney, "An Exegetical Study of Genesis 6:1–4," *JETS* 13:1 [1970]: 43–52). In the Ras Shamra Ugaritic text *The Legends of KRT*, the king Krt is called "the son of El" (*bn il*), (John Gray, *Near Eastern Mythology* [Toronto: Hamlyn House, 1969], 91). The Sumero-Akkadian king was considered the offspring of the goddess and one of the gods, an identification that went back to the earliest of times (Binney, "Exegetical Study," 47). Akkadian king Naram-Sim declared himself not only the offspring of a god, but a god himself, and a cult formed around worshipping him in his lifetime. His name appeared in texts preceded by the cuneiform sign of the image of a star, which functioned as an indicator that what followed was the name of a god (Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, C. 3000–323 BC* [Oxford: Blackwell, 2004], 65–66).

which is modeled in the endogamous actions and oaths of the patriarchs; the proper human response to exogamous marriages; the archetype for disposing of the wives and children of improper marriages; and the possible judgement of God against those who do not end such unacceptable unions. The landscape of the salient mythic 'past' reinforces the voices of 'Ezra' and 'Nehemiah' in object lessons and stories that model appropriate behavior for the 'real' Israel in Persian Yehud, and for those who have entered into a covenant and oath of endogamy.

Conclusion

Some scholars have tried to identify a certain Yochanan ben Bag Bag as the proselyte who asked Hillel to teach him the whole Torah while standing on one foot. According to legend Hillel said to him, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary – go and learn it." (Talmud, *Shabbat* 31a). Rabbinic lore records that Ben Bag Bag did go and study the Torah diligently, and his words regarding that study are recorded in the Mishnah, "*Turn it [the Torah] and turn it again...*" (Mishnah, *Pirke Avot* 5:24). Another piece of rabbinic literature, Numbers Rabbah, includes the idea that the Torah has 70 facets, and like a precious jewel, the 70 faces of the Torah can shine in one's eyes (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 13:5). These rabbinic images are apt metaphors for the modern academic study of the HB: the text, like a jewel, can be turned, and each time the jewel is turned it will refract the light in a different manner.

In the introduction to this study we argued that "All reconstructions are provisional; all reconstructions must be argued for."¹⁸⁰ There is no historical reconstruction concerning the interpretation of Genesis, and there are no *hypotheses* which end the academic discussion and further research. Any historical reconstructions are merely that: reconstructions. Some may be better than others, and perhaps account for more textual data, but any method, reconstruction, or conclusion is contingent and provisional. Ultimately, the 'success' of this study does not hinge on whether a certain preferred method for one scholar is better than another method utilized by a different scholar, but on whether the method selected for *this* study can indeed account for the textual data.

¹⁸⁰ Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 36.

In this study we have turned the multifaceted HB like a jewel to see if perhaps using a certain method how the light would refract from it. We placed the book of Genesis within a fixed socio-historical location, Persian Yehud, and compared it with roughly contemporaneous ideology (proto-apocalypticism) and literature (Ezra, Nehemiah). The purpose of doing so was to identify the possible social background and intellectual context of Genesis; and demonstrate the potential *function* of the myths in Genesis concerning the political, social, and religious conflicts of Persian era Yehud. Ultimately, in this type of reading we suggested that the myths in Genesis do not contain any actual history, but demonstrate the needs and concerns of the social elite in Yehud.

Most importantly, this study represents a *possible* reading of the final form of Genesis within a particular socio-historical setting. As explicitly stated in the study: this method is merely one approach to reading Genesis, and once again, James Trotter offers a valuable insight to the selection of the method for this study,

This is not an effort to delineate the compositional history of the text but to endeavor to suggest a possible reading of the final form of the book... *within a particular socio-historical context* [emphasis mine]. Choosing to focus on the final form of the book is not an attempt to deny the validity or value of these other approaches but simply represents the selection of one possible aspect of the interpretation of the text.¹⁸¹

Furthermore, as I have also expressed, many other methods—diachronic, textual, precompositional, literary, compositional, and comparative—account for the textual data in Genesis brilliantly. But to use our metaphor: the selection of each one of these methods is like turning the jewel of the HB over and over to catch the light in a new fashion each time.

That being said, the work in this study has been an attempt to demonstrate that the particular method selected for this study does indeed account for the textual data reasonably, and

¹⁸¹ Trotter, *Reading Hosea*, 11.

is a *possible* reading of the final form of Genesis within a particular socio-historical setting. I believe the utility of this method can be demonstrated by further aspects of research into the myths of Genesis located within Persian Yehud. Primarily, as far as in-depth analysis goes, this study deals with the material in the above chapters. However, I would like to offer some additional examples of how the proposed method could work in analyzing different myths in Genesis, and may provide material for added research on this particular topic in the future. In addition, I also believe that the suggestions below further demonstrate the utility of the methods employed in this study.

Religious Cultural Boundary Markers?

In our study we proposed that some innovative religious practices may have needed legitimizing in the formative myths of Genesis, and certainly there are few practices that became more closely associated with Hellenistic and Roman Judaism than Sabbath, food laws, and circumcision. However, if we were to fully apply our method for this study would there be any evidence of their inclusion in Genesis following the function of myths in Persian Yehud that we argued for in our study?

In Wellhausen's formulation of the DH, P was the last of the pentateuchal sources, and in his estimation, was written after the exile. P largely appears in complete sections in the narrative throughout Genesis, though there are sections where it has been supposedly woven into the text and combined with other sources (e.g, Gen 6–9). Reading Genesis synchronically in an attempt to identify themes that may have been important in a *recontextualization* setting of religious disagreements in the Persian period produces an interesting case when considered along with Wellhausen's DH. This possible theme in the Genesis material could be described as "cultural

boundary markers” (Sabbath, food laws, and circumcision); and the boundary markers all incur in discrete chapters that have been identified as P in source theory.

The first cultural boundary marker is Sabbath (compare Genesis 1–2:3 with Nehemiah’s Sabbath reform).¹⁸² A second boundary marker theme in Genesis is food laws (compare Gen 9; Eze 33:23–25). The third cultural boundary marker is circumcision, and this theme occurs in the Genesis myth of Abram/Abraham (Genesis 17). What is interesting within the framework of the current study is that if a particular group practiced circumcision (Yehudian elite, Temple authorities) while another group did not or had ceased the practice (the people of the land, Samaritans, etc.) then those who had kept this practice, or instituted it while in Babylon, would have exclusive claims to the land of Yehud and control of the Persian funded Temple according to the myths of Genesis and the covenant of God in Nehemiah.

These three chapters in which Sabbath, a food law, and circumcision are ‘normalized’ all occur in sections that are identified as ‘P’ by many source critics, and the correlation is obvious; however, it may also be following our line of reasoning, that as other aspects of post-exilic society, especially innovative facets, needed legitimizing from the past, so too some societal and religious practices, especially innovative ones, needed to be woven into this legitimating narrative. Functionally these three myths establish a connection between Israel’s ‘origins’ and ‘past’, and justify religious practices that may have needed normalizing during the time of the author(s), or may have been used in a more restrictive sense to maintain the elite’s foothold on their societal governance.

The covenant, its obligations and cultural boundary markers, may have ensured that a small group of Persian appointed persons with ethnic ties to the land of Yehud were able to

¹⁸² Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 173. “This is one of the few OT passages in which Sabbath observance is the main issue. This has led some to see Sabbath observance as, therefore, a post-exilic issue.”

appropriate the needed land for their social and religious reforms, and further ensure that their minority were able to maintain control due to certain restrictive practices that may have excluded others (both insiders and outsiders *a priori*).

Land Acquisition

Using the proposed method an interesting comparison of legitimating myths for land acquisition could be Abraham's purchase for the "full price" of the cave at Macpelah (Genesis 23), with another book of Temple propaganda from the Persian period, 1 Chronicles, in which David buys for the "full price" the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite for his altar to the Lord (1 Chron 21:22-25).¹⁸³

The Temple and Tithing

A working assumption of scholars pertaining to the new perspective on Yehud as a Persian colony with a diverse population mentioned throughout this study is, "The community of Yehud was not unified but experienced substantial social conflict. This included diverse opinions about the construction and function of the Second Temple as well as cultic practices."¹⁸⁴ By accounting for the textual data in Genesis with the method being employed here there is another theme that may have been important for those who were empowered by their Persian overlords to return to their land with which they had ethnic ties to govern under the auspices of the Empire. A significant project in this governance was the erection of a temple, which would have required the acquisition or re-acquisition of land. This 'religious' structure was used for cultic purposes, but it also functioned as a center for the collection of imperial taxes in the Persian period. It is

¹⁸³ See Francesca Stavrakopoulou, *Land of our Fathers: The Roles of Ancestor Veneration in Biblical Land Claims* (New York: T & T Clark, 2010).

¹⁸⁴ Berquist, "Approaching Yehud," 4.

certain that throughout the Temple's history there were different groups that questioned the legitimacy of the Second Temple and its priests (e.g., calendar, efficacy of Day of Atonement). However, during the Persian period this political center may have needed legitimizing, and there may have been significant disagreements as to its authenticity, practices, and function.

Following one method that was used in this study, the Temple and proto-apocalyptic and apocalyptic ideologies, and subsequent literature, could be compared to Genesis or the Pentateuch. David Suter argues that "The early Enoch tradition as a whole is singularly uninterested in the matter of priestly function in a sacrificial cultus, although in other respects it reflects a priestly perspective and has a deep abiding interest in the temple, including the celestial temple and eschatological temple to be built by God at the end of days."¹⁸⁵ Suter also comments "In his response to the second group of papers at the Fourth Enoch Seminar G. Nickelsburg commented, "I was struck by the observations of David Suter in his paper for the last session. Perhaps the first to champion anti-temple polemics in the Book of Watchers."¹⁸⁶ Schafer writes,

"I would like to go even a step further and posit that Enoch's heavenly Temple can be understood as a devastating critique of the Temple in Jerusalem. It has been argued that the fallen Watchers correspond to the earthly priests and that the charge that the Watchers defiled themselves with human women echoes polemic against priests of the Second Temple."¹⁸⁷

There are some interesting questions that could be pursued here. If the roots of this material are priestly, and Ezra-Nehemiah are trying to institute innovative religious practices: what type of priests were in the land during the exile? What kind of religion was practiced? What kind of religious conflict may have existed between the returnees and the 'Am-Ha'aretz? Did the Yehudian elite return with a syncretistic religion from their time in Persia?

¹⁸⁵ David W. Suter, "Jubilees, the Temple, and the Aaronite Priesthood," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* (eds. G. Boccaccini and G. Ibba; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 398.

¹⁸⁶ David Suter, "Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest: The Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch 6-16," *HUCA* 50 (1979), 115-135.

¹⁸⁷ Peter Schafer *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 66.

Another Hebrew book from this period that could be included in this subject is Malachi. Malachi's concerns would be suitably placed within the Persian events when imperial funding was withdrawn from the Jerusalem temple, and the obligations towards the temple and the priests fell solely on the local population. Direct Imperial Persian involvement waxed and waned throughout the Persian period. Persian interests in Yehud began with Cyrus and economic intensification—this economic intensification was from Yehud in the direction of the empire—and the strengthening of the empire's borders. Yehud enjoyed better economic prosperity during times of conflict between Persia and Egypt. Imperial funding included monies for the construction of a centralized taxation center/temple, but also at times, funding for the religious functionaries and imperial servants who worked there under the auspices of their imperial overlords. When imperial taxes were required to be paid, but imperial funding was no longer being supplied, there may have been friction between the small but powerful group that had returned to Yehud whose responsibility it was to govern and collect taxes, and the “people of the land” whom the tax obligation fell upon, and at times, the obligation to fund the priests of the Temple.

An interesting point of connection could be recorded in Nehemiah 13, when the Ammonite Tobiah is found occupying the room where previously the offerings and tithes had been collected at the temple. Once Nehemiah clears his *political* adversary from the temple “all Judah” brings the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil to the storehouse. In Nehemiah, by far, the topic that takes up the most space in the summary of the covenant is the obligations to fund the temple. Functionally then, narratives such as Abram tithing one-tenth of his possessions to the priest of El Elyon, and Jacob/Israel building a house to God at Bethel and promising to tithe one-tenth of all his possessions would legitimate social and religious institutions, especially if they

are innovative, concerning the people of the covenant and their obligations to fund the new house of God (i.e., pay taxes to the Persians). Once again, a covenant with ‘YHWH’ not to neglect the house of their God, along with legitimizing paradigmatic myths from the ‘past’ (and in other parts of the Pentateuch and HB: religious laws, and the ‘voices’ of the prophets), would all be useful social controls in such an unsettled situation.

Joseph in ‘Egypt’

A final important myth in Genesis which could be studied using the methods in this study is the paradigmatic patriarch Joseph. Brueggemann writes,

While it is not certain that the Joseph narrative should be placed in a Persian context (Genesis 37-50), the scholarly momentum is now moving that direction. We may, in any case, take it in a Persian context, for the Joseph narrative, like the Daniel narrative, is easily transferable from one imperial context to another... It is clear that the Joseph narrative is an account of how the “chosen people” made their way in an imperial environment... On those grounds, we may consider the Joseph narrative alongside the others I have pursued, as a study of accommodation and defiance amid the Persian Empire.¹⁸⁸

Brueggemann goes on to suggest that model of accommodation and defiance in the Joseph narrative is very thin on defiance, and that the central theme is an “accommodation that brings with it enormous rewards and benefits for him and his people.” Obviously, within the context that has been suggested for the socio-historical location and the function of the myths in Genesis within that setting, the theme of accommodation to the Empire, and the rewards for doing so would be self-evident.

On the other hand, there is an element within this narrative that would require some extra work. It was argued in chapter four that the myth of Shechem and the voices of Ezra and Nehemiah were pursuing a social program of endogamy, and we demonstrated from all three

¹⁸⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *Out of Babylon* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2010),

books at length this feature. However, while in ‘Egypt’ Joseph marries the daughter of an Egyptian priest, a practice that is not portrayed negatively in the text. Furthermore, another important Hebrew myth has Moses marrying the daughter of a Midianite priest. There are some themes already mentioned in this study that would also be important in analyzing the function of the Joseph myths: the purity of the matriarchs in foreign lands, and the continual theme in Genesis of the younger supplanting the elder demonstrated in Israel’s blessing of Manasseh and Ephraim. However, in suggesting that a primary function of the myths in Genesis is legitimizing endogamy, an exogamous practice for some paradigmatic patriarchs must be accounted for. In this instance I believe that priestly practices in Achaemenid Persia would need investigation, syncretism, and the possible exportation of Persian religious practices into Yehud, and ultimately legitimized in the pentateuchal myths and legal material. One of the important reasons that this study focused on Genesis 1–35 in Persian Yehud and did not deal with the Joseph myths is that the questions above would require an extensive and significant study in its own right, which was simply too large to include with the work that had already completed for this thesis. However, I do believe that the Joseph myth would bear some significant data using the method applied in this study, and would work well within the boundaries proposed for this thesis.

Summary

Ultimately, I believe that the work in this study, the methods applied, and the conclusions from the textual data do indeed represent one *possible* reconstruction and *recontextualization* of the myths in Genesis located within the social conflicts of Persian Yehud. These myths reflect the needs and concerns of the social elite who were empowered by the Achaemenid Empire to return to the land with which they had ethnic ties and govern the province of *Abar Nahara*.

Furthermore, I would suggest that the methods employed in this study have shown enough utility to be applied in the same manner to other myths in Genesis, and I believe that once the textual data of these other myths is evaluated using the suggested method that the theory suggested within this study would be further strengthened as the function of these other myths can be shown to operate within the conflicts of Persian Yehud.

Addendum A

Possible Reconstruction A

P Creation Myth: Gen 1-2:4

P Genealogy with Proposed Interpolation:

5 This is the list of the descendants of Adam. When God created humankind, he made them in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them “Humankind” when they were created.

³ When Adam had lived one hundred thirty years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. ⁴ The days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Thus all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred thirty years; and he died.

⁶ When Seth had lived one hundred five years, he became the father of Enosh. ⁷ Seth lived after the birth of Enosh eight hundred seven years, and had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Thus all the days of Seth were nine hundred twelve years; and he died.

⁹ When Enosh had lived ninety years, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰ Enosh lived after the birth of Kenan eight hundred fifteen years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Thus all the days of Enosh were nine hundred five years; and he died.

¹² When Kenan had lived seventy years, he became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³ Kenan lived after the birth of Mahalalel eight hundred and forty years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Thus all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died.

¹⁵ When Mahalalel had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Jared. ¹⁶ Mahalalel lived after the birth of Jared eight hundred thirty years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷ Thus all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred ninety-five years; and he died.

¹⁸ When Jared had lived one hundred sixty-two years he became the father of Enoch. ^{6:1} When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, ^{6:2} the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. ^{6:4} The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown. ¹⁹ Jared lived after the birth of Enoch eight hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Thus all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty-two years; and he died.

²¹ When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. ²² Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him.

²⁵ When Methuselah had lived one hundred eighty-seven years, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶ Methuselah lived after the birth of Lamech seven hundred eighty-two years, and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷ Thus all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty-nine years; and he died.

²⁸ When Lamech had lived one hundred eighty-two years, he became the father of a son; ³⁰ Lamech lived after the birth of Noah five hundred ninety-five years, and had other sons and daughters. ³¹ Thus all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy-seven years; and he died.

³² After Noah was five hundred years old, Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

P Flood Myth:

6 ⁹ These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. ¹³ And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶ Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and put the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every kind shall come in to you, to keep them alive. ²¹ Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them." ²² Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

7 ⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came on the earth. ¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. ¹³ On the very same day Noah with his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons entered the ark, ¹⁴ they and every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind—every bird, every winged creature. ¹⁵ They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ^{16a} And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him.

^{17a} The flood continued forty days on the earth; ¹⁸ The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹ The waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered; ²⁰ the waters swelled above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. ²¹ And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all human beings; ²⁴ And the waters swelled on the earth for one hundred fifty days.

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; ^{2a} the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, ^{3b} At the end of one hundred

fifty days the waters had abated; ⁴ and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵ The waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

^{13a} In the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; ¹⁴ In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. ¹⁵ Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶ “Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁷ Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” ¹⁸ So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives. ¹⁹ And every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out of the ark by families.

9 God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. ² The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on everything that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. ³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. ⁴ Only, you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. ⁵ For your own lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning: from every animal I will require it and from human beings, each one for the blood of another, I will require a reckoning for human life.

⁶ Whoever sheds the blood of a human,
by a human shall that person’s blood be shed;
for in his own image
God made humankind.

⁷ And you, be fruitful and multiply, abound on the earth and multiply in it.”

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹ “As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” ¹² God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³ I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷ God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

²⁸ After the flood Noah lived three hundred fifty years. ²⁹ All the days of Noah were nine hundred fifty years; and he died.

Addendum B

Possible Reconstruction B

P Creation Myth: Gen 1-2:4

P Genealogy: 5:1-28, 30-32

Sons of God Myth (Gen 6:1-2, 4)

6 When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. ⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown.

P Flood Myth:

6:9-22;

7:6, 11, 13-16a, 17a, 18-21, 24;

8:1-2a, 3b-5, 13a, 14-19

9:1-17, 21-28

Addendum C

J Primeval Narrative

J Creation Myth: Gen 2:4b-24; 3:1-21, 23;

Cain and Abel Myth: 4:2-16,

J Genealogy: 4:17b-26, 29

J Flood Myth:

6 ³ Then the Lord said, “My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years.” ⁵ The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. ⁶ And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the Lord said, “I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord.

7 Then the Lord said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation. ² Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and its mate; ³ and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴ For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.” ⁵ And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him, and the Lord shut him in. ⁷ And Noah with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸ Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, ⁹ two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰ And after seven days the waters of the flood came on the earth. ¹² The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. ^{16b} And the Lord shut him in. ^{17b} And the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ²² everything on dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³ He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, human beings and animals and creeping things and birds of the air; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark.

8 ^{2b} The rain from the heavens was restrained, ^{3a} and the waters gradually receded from the earth. ⁶ At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷ and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸ Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; ⁹ but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. ¹⁰ He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; ¹¹ and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew

that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹² Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more. ^{13b} And Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying.

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹ And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.

²² As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,
summer and winter, day and night,
shall not cease."

9 ¹⁸ The sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. ¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was peopled.

²⁰ Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. ²¹ He drank some of the wine and became drunk, and he lay uncovered in his tent. ²² And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. ²³ Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴ When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said, "Cursed be Canaan; lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers."

²⁶ He also said,
"Blessed by the Lord my God be Shem;
and let Canaan be his slave.

²⁷ May God make space for Japheth,
and let him live in the tents of Shem;
and let Canaan be his slave."

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